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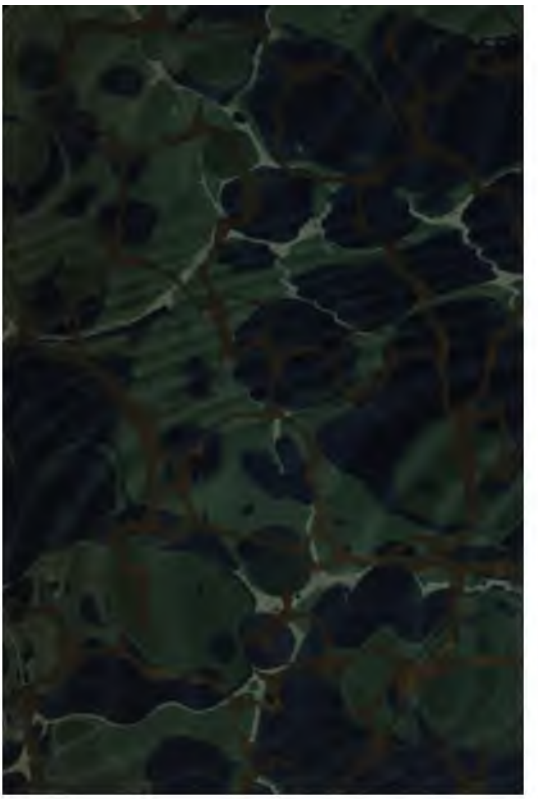

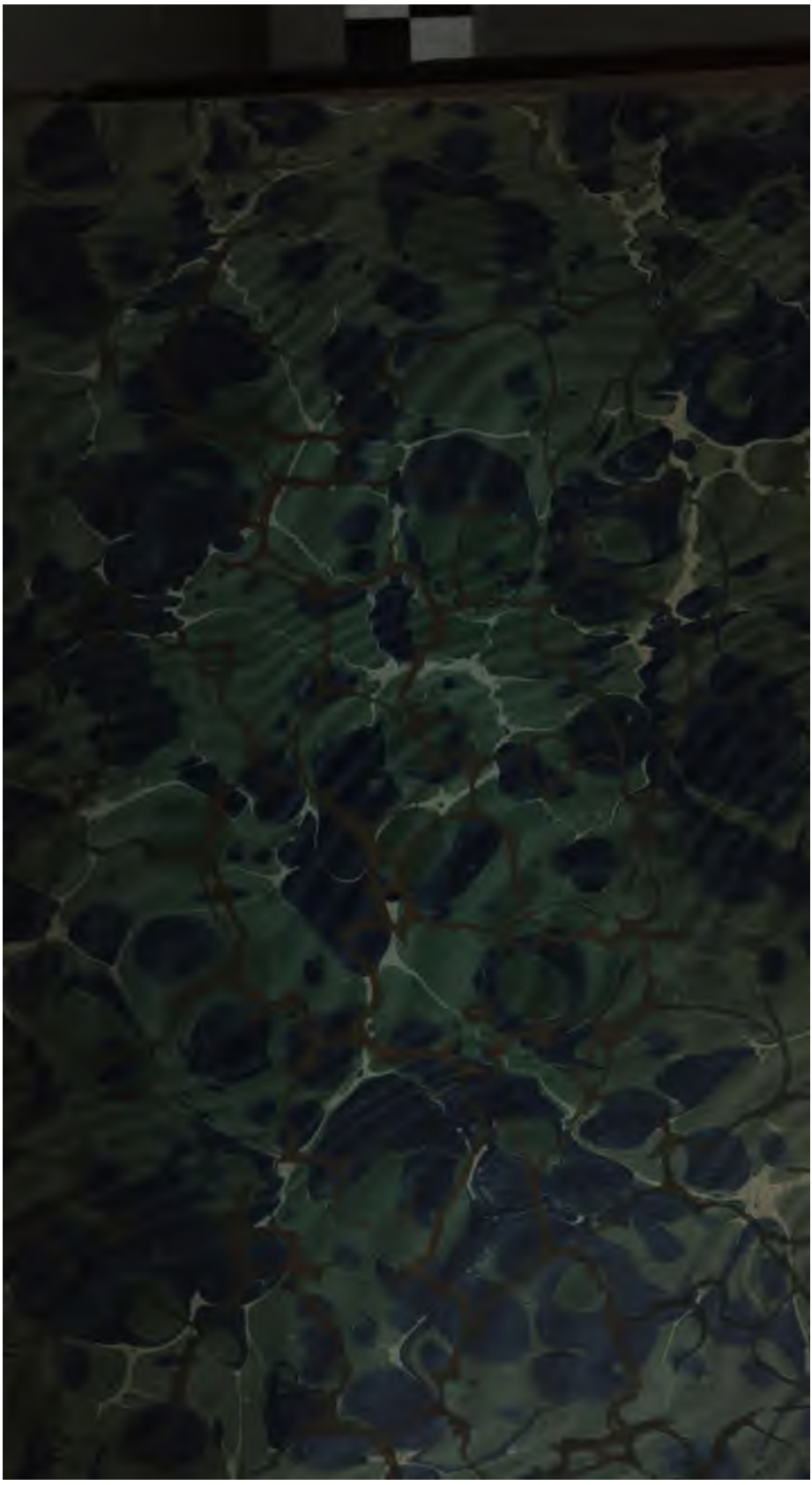

S. W. Brewster.

Capt. U. S. M. C.

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The greatest happiness a grisette can experience is to make the conquest of an actor.

Photogravure from Original Drawing by William Glackens.

The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

EDMOND AND HIS COUSIN

Translated into English by

EDITH MARY NORRIS

THE FREDERICK J. QUINBY COMPANY

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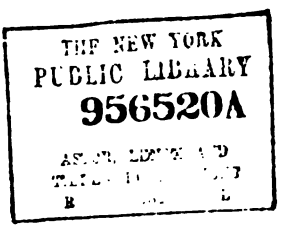

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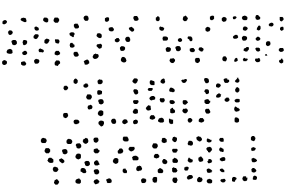

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CHAPTER I

The Interior of a Household

Some people are in the habit of doubting everything, many others turn everything into ridicule, and a very great number consider themselves qualified to understand and judge of everything. It is convenient to doubt, for then one need not investigate. Thus I have seen a good many people shrug their shoulders when people spoke to them of the distance of the sun from the earth; they answered that no one had been able to go to the sun and ascertain this and, starting from this principle, they refused to believe in astronomy. The sect of the Pyrrhoneans is numerous, "Plus negare potest asinus quam probare philosophus."

To turn everything into ridicule is still easier. By Jove! it is by making game of others that so many people in the world gain a reputation for wit. Poor wit that, of which the shallowest brain has always enough and to spare. There is a ridiculous side to everything if one wishes to look for it; even the sublime is not exempt (above all the sublimity of our epoch). If you like you can find something to ridicule as you witness the representation of a masterpiece of art, as you also can in

listening to an academic discourse; nothing is necessary but the disposition.

Then, finally, there are people who are doubtful of nothing; that is to say, who believe themselves to possess capacity, talent, a vocation for anything and everything. That which they do not know is that which they did not take the trouble of learning, but it was only for them to set themselves to it and they would have excelled anyone at it; that which they do not do is that which they do not care to take the trouble to do; for, I repeat, they possess innate knowledge, they have genius for anything, they could make gold —if they wished to make it. In the mean time, they will borrow a crown of you, because ordinarily those people who know how to do everything cannot find a way of earning their living.

To what does this preamble tend? you wish me to tell you, perhaps? Well, it means that M. Edmond Guerval, the young man whose history I am about to relate to you, comes under the last head in the category I have cited to you. But, before making him better known to you, permit me to transport you into a small apartment situated on the fourth floor in a rather handsome house in the Faubourg Poissonière.

There, in a room which served at the same time for a sitting-room and bedroom and furnished very simply, but with a good taste that announced order and easy circumstances, three persons were

seated about a round table on which was a lamp covered with a shade, for it was evening in the winter season. I had a desire to inform you, like the watchmen, as to the hour and the weather.

First of all, there was a young person of twenty or thereabouts, a pretty brunette with soft black eyes (which is not incompatible), whose features, without being really regular, had an expression which pleased and attracted immediately. Her hair, carefully and prettily arranged, fell in great curls at each side of her face but left exposed a high white brow, which indicated a mind in which duplicity and falsehood could never find a place. This young girl was named Constance; she was the cousin of that Edmond Guerval whom I have just told you of.

Near Constance sat another young lady with her hair drawn, in the Chinese fashion, back from her face. Picture to yourself one of those animated and bright faces on which a smile is always in evidence; a medium-sized but pleasing mouth, small but mischievous eyes, a nose small rather than well-cut, in fact, a comical rather than a pretty face, and you will have a portrait of Pélagie, a friend and neighbor of Constance.

The third person was a young man of twenty-five to twenty-six years, rather ugly and deeply pitted by the smallpox, whose nose was too big, his forehead too low, his eyes too light, but who redeemed these disadvantages by an expression of

timidity which is not common nowadays in young men.

This young man, whose attire was decent but very simple, without a suspicion of fashion, was seated beside the fire reading to the young ladies, who were employed with their needlework,—

"'In the midst of the forest was an old chapel, fast falling into ruin, which the crows, the owls and the bats had long made their favorite dwelling, the valiant Adhemar—'"

"Good gracious! M. Ginguet, how badly you read!" said Mademoiselle Pélagie; "you go on and on—you mix it all up till no one can understand anything."

"However, I pause at the periods and at the commas."

"I don't know whether it was the owls or the valiant Adhemar who had taken up their dwelling in the old chapel—"

"I'll begin again, mademoiselle, 'Which the crows, the owls and the bats had long made their favorite dwelling—' a period. 'The valiant Adhemar did not fear to penetrate into the midst of these ruins at the hour of midnight—'"

"You would not have had the courage to do so, M. Ginguet!"

"Why do you think that, mademoiselle?"

"Because I believe you are rather timid."

"Mademoiselle, I am not a blusterer, a crazy fellow, it is true; but I beg you to believe that if

it were a question of defending you, of protecting you from danger, nothing would deter me."

"Meanwhile, you have to have some one hold a light for you to come up the staircase when you have forgotten your cane."

"That is because the staircase up to the first floor is so highly waxed and polished that I am always afraid of falling."

"Oh, that is correct; when one can see it clearly it becomes less slippery. Ha, ha, ha! But please go on."

"'Into the midst of these ruins at the hour of midnight. The moon was then shining in all her brilliance, and her reflections created a thousand fantastic objects which —'"

"What have I done with my needle? I had it just now. It's a real English one and I prize it."

"Do you want me to look on the ground, mademoiselle?"

"Oh, wait! here it is. How stupid I am, it was right beside my work."

"'A thousand fantastic objects which would have frightened any other than a noble and stainless knight —'"

"Come, it's my thimble now. Good gracious! how unfortunate I am this evening. I must find it — my little ivory thimble — or somebody will step on it and crush it, and it was a present from my uncle, who doesn't often give me one. Oh, here it is, it was on my knees. Well, why don't

you go on, M. Ginguet? You stop every minute. How do you think I can understand what you read."

"'Than a noble and stainless knight whose valor had never been denied. But young Adhemar, drawing his sword out of its scabbard —'"

"How stupid! if he draws his sword at all, it is quite clear that he must draw it out of the scabbard. It was you who added that, M. Ginguet."

"No, mademoiselle, I added nothing; if you will take the trouble to look at it, you will see that I did not."

"It's needless; go on."

"'Out of its scabbard, unhesitatingly entered the gloomy vaulted precincts of the old chapel, crushing beneath his feet the flagstones rotted by time.'"

"Tell me now, Constance, does this book amuse you? I think it has neither end nor interest; I like the 'Petit-Poucet' or the 'Peau d'Ane' much better, and then M. Ginguet reads in such a monotonous way. It sounds to me like an old blindman's clarinet."

Up to this time Constance had remained quiet, leaving her young friend Pélagie to tease M. Ginguet; she had paid little attention to the reading, but instead had often turned her eyes towards a small clock on the mantelpiece, which had just sounded the half hour after nine.

Constance felt disappointed as the evening wore on without the arrival of her cousin Edmond, for

the young girl dearly loved him. Constance had been, so to speak, brought up with Edmond; their mothers were sisters and both became widowed when very young; they had vowed never to marry again, but to devote themselves to the education of their respective children.

The two sisters had lived together, and their sweetest hope had been that Edmond and Constance, who was only four years younger than her cousin, should be one day united in marriage.

Everything seemed to indicate that this union would be for the happiness of the two children; they loved each other as brother and sister, and as they grew up it was to be presumed that a tenderer love would usurp the place of the fraternal friendship. As to the monetary considerations, they were all that was desirable; each sister had the same fortune in the funds, which she intended to leave entirely to her child. These ladies had seen the "Deux Gendres" and "Père Goreot," but that did not change their resolutions; good mothers never believe in the ingratitude of their children, and they were right. It is so sweet to count on the love and gratitude of those we cherish. Besides, ungrateful children are not natural, they are the exception.

But fate, which is always right, or so say our friends the optimists, did not permit these two good mothers to live to realize the plan which they had formed. Madame Guerval died just as her

son had attained his eighteenth year, and Edmond remained with his aunt and cousin, whose loving care softened the bitterness of his grief; but in the following year Constance also lost her mother, and the poor children were thus both orphaned.

Edmond was nineteen, Constance was sixteen; they were still too young to marry. Besides, one must wear mourning for one's mother; but as it would not have been proper that the young people should continue to live together, Constance, immediately after her mother's death, went to live with M. Pause, Pélagie's uncle.

M. Pause was a musician of the third order; he had played the 'cello since he was ten years old, and he was now fifty-five, but he had never been able to read anything at sight except in the key of F; he loved music passionately, and played his instrument as if he loved that; however, he played very indifferently, never in time, but regularly following behind the others. M. Pause was an excellent man, a model of promptitude; he always arrived before his time at the theatre where he was employed, was never fined, and showed no ill-humor when they made him begin the same piece five or six times over at the rehearsals. All these qualities had won him the esteem of his chiefs and had caused them to excuse his inferior talent.

M. Pause was not rich. Though in this century music has made great progress and threatens to invade the public squares as well as the gardens,

one does not earn high wages by playing the 'cello in a theatre where they give melodramas. Some lessons which M. Pause gave in the morning augmented his income but slightly, for his pupils had the habit of leaving him as soon as they could manage to read at sight themselves. Despite that, the poor musician, who was as methodical in his household as he was prompt at the theatre, lived in happiness and contentment with his niece Pélagie, the lively little girl you have seen working beside her friend and teasing M. Ginguet, a young clerk at the Treasury and an honest fellow, whose good-humor bordered a little on simplicity and who was desperately in love with the 'cello player's niece.

M. Pause had sometimes gone with his niece to see the two widows and their children. Constance and Pélagie were on very intimate terms; in youth one so quickly grows attached — and there are some people who keep this habit all their lives.

Constance had often heard her mother praise M. Pause's upright character and excellent heart, and when she had lost her she thought she could not do better than to go and ask for shelter and protection from this old friend of her family. Pélagie's uncle joyfully welcomed the young orphan; he would have received her even had Constance come to be a charge on him; but the young girl, who had a modest competence, would not enter the poor musician's house until he had consented to receive payment, which she regulated

herself; in this way Constance's presence in Pause's house made things more easy, and at the same time she brought many pleasures to it.

At the time we begin this history, Constance had already been for three years and a half an inmate of M. Pause's dwelling; young Edmond had attained his twenty-fourth year, and nothing stood in the way of his union with his pretty cousin, who was over nineteen and knew all that was necessary to make an excellent housewife.

Why, then, had this union not taken place, since no obstacle stood in the way of these young people's happiness? It was probably because not the slightest impediment came in the way of his love that Edmond was in no hurry to be happy. It seems that men attach no value to that which they obtain without trouble; let an end be easily attained, and you will see how few competitors seek to arrive there. Thus Edmond, quite sure of his cousin's love, quite sure that as soon as he wished she would give him her hand, always deferred this union, which had been so greatly desired by both their mothers.

It is necessary to tell you that on coming into possession of the modest fortune which his mother had left him while still quite young, Edmond, not knowing yet what career he should enter and believing himself capable of success in all that he undertook, had already tried several professions, but his changeable disposition and his versatile mind

had caused him soon to abandon them. However, before marrying his cousin he insisted that he must have a position, a fortune and even fame to offer her, and it was because he had not yet acquired all these that he put off the time of his marriage.

You know now the persons with whom you will have most to do. Let us now return to the round table, to listen to the end of their conversation.

CHAPTER II

M. Pause

Constance had not answered her cousin's question, so preoccupied had she been in thinking of Edmond.

"Constance, at least, is very fortunate, for while M. Ginguet was reading she had something else to think of, so she did not listen. If he had read the 'Moniteur' she would have thought he was still reading the 'Mysteries de la Tour du Sud.' Ah, that is what it is to have a cousin who is going to marry us."

"A cousin!" said Constance, blushing and awakening from her revery. "Yes, that is true — I think Edmond is very late this evening."

"Oh, I was sure you were thinking of him. You love him so much."

"I cannot deny that; my mother betrothed me to Edmond, and often told me how much I ought to love him, because he would one day be my protector, my husband."

"And he is a very fortunate young man!" muttered Ginguet, taking the tongs to poke the fire.

"What do you say, M. Ginguet?" demanded Pélagie with a mischievous look.

"Me! nothing at all, mademoiselle, I am attending to the fire."

"But when is the wedding to come off, Constance? I shall be delighted to dance at it. I am to be maid of honor, you know, and my dress is already settled on. It will be charming too."

"Then I hope they will have me for the best man," said Ginguet timidly, not daring to look at Mademoiselle Pélagie.

"That's all right, M. Ginguet, we shall see, we will think of it, but don't weary us in advance with your demands. In the first place, as maid of honor, I shall arrange all that. Constance has promised. Your marriage is fixed for next month, isn't it?"

"Why — that will depend on Edmond."

"It's very singular that your future husband should not evince more eagerness; were I in your place, I should say to him, 'Cousin, if you don't wish to marry me, tell me so frankly.'"

"Why, Pélagie! what an idea! can I suppose that my cousin no longer loves me? What does it matter when our marriage takes place? so long as I know that some day I shall be his wife, I am happy—"

As she said these words the young girl stifled a sigh, but after a moment she resumed,—

"Edmond wishes to have an honorable position in the world, but he does not yet quite know what profession he ought to adopt. The desire to acquire renown, to hear his name coupled with praise,

troubles him and preoccupies him incessantly. I cannot wish that he should do otherwise than seek to acquire an honorable rank in society, although I do not think that glory adds to happiness. In the first place, you know he has a great taste for music — he is studying composition, he wants to be a Boieldieu, a Rossini."

"Yes, and all that he has accomplished in that direction is a waltz which he has published and in which my uncle says there are some pretty bars."

"As for me, I never have been able to play his waltz on my flute," said M. Ginguet; "it's surprising how difficult it is."

"Because you never play in time! Ah, M. Ginguet! you could never compose a waltz."

"Mademoiselle, a fortnight ago I composed a little galop that I should like to dedicate to you."

"A little galop! That must be pretty! In fact your cousin has abandoned music for poetry. He has composed a comedy in three acts, and in verse. It is very fine."

"By Jove! how he was hissed. What a racket there was the day it was put on the stage!" muttered Ginguet, still fiddling with the fire and failing to notice Pélagie's efforts to silence him.

"My cousin was not fortunate at the theatre," said Constance, sighing, "and I don't think he has any desire to try it again."

"Why, what can you expect? no one is successful at the very outset. But he must have some

intellect to be able to write a comedy at all — even if it did fail. M. Ginguet, I suppose you have never made a verse in your life?"

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, I composed a song for my aunt's birthday to the tune of 'Grenadier, que tu m'affliges!' There are eight couplets."

"That must be funny! You must sing it to me some evening when I want to go to sleep."

"Just now Edmond is enraptured with painting," said Constance; "he is finishing a picture which he is going to send to the exposition."

"Is it an historical picture, mademoiselle?" inquired M. Ginguet, at length relinquishing the tongs.

"Oh, no, monsieur, it is a genre picture."

"Good gracious, M. Ginguet, you ask questions that are devoid of all common sense. Do you suppose that M. Edmond, who has only been studying painting for a short time, can paint an historical picture at the very outset?"

"By Jove, mademoiselle, I have a little nephew who is only nine years old, and he's drawing Brutus and Epaminondas every day of his life; it isn't more difficult to copy M. Dabuffe's 'Souvenirs' and 'Regrets.'"

"Do hold your tongue, M. Ginguet; you make me sick talking like that! One can tell very well that you never learned drawing."

"You are mistaken, mademoiselle, I have been taking lessons for six months, and I can already

draw windmills very passably indeed. Would you like me to go on reading?"

"No, don't you see we are talking; cut out the scallops of this embroidery for me, but be very careful not to cut into a notch."

"Be assured that I will use the utmost care, mademoiselle."

M. Ginguet took the embroidery and the scissors and began to cut without lifting his eyes for fear of committing some awkwardness.

"If my cousin's picture is not received at the Salon," said Constance, "I am sure that he will abandon painting as he has abandoned music and play-writing."

"What can you expect?—he is seeking his vocation; he would like to do everything, and that is impossible. He has a great deal of talent but hardly any perseverance, that cousin of yours."

"A rolling stone gathers no moss," said M. Ginguet in an undertone, as he industriously continued to snip.

"That's all very well, M. Ginguet, we shall see how much moss you gather; you've been in an office for seven years, I believe, and you are still a supernumerary."

"Mademoiselle, it is because they don't do right by me — everything goes by favor; but I shall get there, never fear."

"Yes, if you keep on, in fifteen years or so they'll make you an office boy."

"Oh, mademoiselle —"

"Take care, monsieur, or you'll cut one of my scallops."

"You meant to say I should be chief of the office, didn't you?"

Pélagie began to laugh and at that moment somebody rang the door bell. Constance's face expanded, for she did not doubt that it was her cousin; but the young girl's joy was of short duration.

It was a little fat, thickset, inflated man, having in the middle of his face a little bump with two openings which was supposed to be a nose, and beneath that a great expanse of mouth, stopped happily by his ears; which with great, goggle eyes and bristly hair, which grew almost up to his eyebrows, united in making his face one of the funniest that any one ever saw even in the "Dantan" gallery.

This little man was honest M. Pause, Pélagie's uncle, a most intrepid performer on the 'cello (which does not mean that he was the best), who had come from his theatre much earlier than was his custom.

M. Ginguet left his scallops for a moment to greet M. Pause respectfully and to yield to him his place beside the fire.

"What, is it you, M. Pause?" said Constance; "why, it is barely ten o'clock, and ordinarily your theatre is not closed so soon."

"That is true, my dear, but this evening we had

a new piece in three acts and the public wanted to hear only two, which necessarily shortened the evening."

"So the piece was a failure, uncle?"

"Yes, my dearest."

"Was it so very bad?" inquired Ginguet, without taking his eyes from his scallops.

"Bad — why, that depends; there were some pretty things — above all in the parts for the orchestra; as for that, they are to give it again tomorrow, and the director has said that it will go."

"Go where?"

"Why, make a hit; be carried to success by a storm of applause. That's what would have happened today if they would have given the whole body of the house to the author, as is the habitual practice with the plays of our great modern men, who do not wish that a single ticket should be paid for on the occasion of a first presentation of one of their plays; because at a first presentation everybody should be acquainted, which would ensure general enthusiasm. But yesterday the manager had the weakness to want to take in some receipts, and what is the result — the piece failed. That's a great gain, as the author had proved to him as plainly as two and two make four, saying to him,—

"'I consented to let you have some of my plays, that's all very well; but it is not sufficient for you to pay me more than others — it is now necessary

for you to sacrifice your receipts for six representations. That, monsieur, is the only way to make money now.'"

"Uncle, if they are going to give passes for the whole body of the theatre next week, can't you get some for Constance and I?"

"Why, that will be difficult; they don't give passes lightly to the first persons who ask them—they want people on whom they can depend. Besides, my dear Pélagie, you know that I don't like to ask the slightest favor. We have our orchestra passes once a fortnight—that's quite nice."

"Oh, yes, they are nice, your orchestra passes are," said Ginguet, as he continued to cut his scallops; "you have to pay twenty sous for each person with those, and they put you on the side, at a place where it is impossible to see. Then they tell you that by paying an additional twenty you may go where you can face the stage. Good! you pay the supplemental price, you go to the centre, there are no vacant seats, you shout, you see empty boxes, but to go into those you must pay fifteen sous extra, a total of fifty-five sous for a place that is marked two francs fifteen sous at the office—so with your free pass you pay exactly five sous more than the price and you have to remain two hours in line. I haven't said anything yet of the footstool that the boxkeeper thrusts almost by force under one's feet, of the 'Theatrical News' one must buy, or of the price of checking one's

umbrella. I have a horror of free passes, I would much rather rent a box than accept an employé's pass."

"Poor M. Ginguet! what a passion to get into."

"Well, mademoiselle, it is because I remember the last time I took my aunts and my sisters to the play — I had employé's passes — and I spent all I had saved for months."

"Why don't you pay attention to my scallops, that would be much better. There, you've cut one of them now; oh, I was sure you would do it. Give it to me, monsieur; I won't let you touch it again."

"Mademoiselle, I will repair the damage."

"No, you've done quite enough harm now."

Pélagie took her embroidery from M. Ginguet, who appeared overwhelmed by his mishap, and at this moment the bell rang again.

"This must surely be he," said Constance.

A young man with smooth hair, a little pointed beard on his chin and whose regular features were stamped with an expression of self-sufficiency which deprived them of all their charm, soon entered the apartment, and without greeting any one threw himself ill-temperedly into an armchair as he exclaimed,—

"It is pitiable! it is shocking! it is detestable!"

"What do you mean, cousin?" asked Constance, looking anxiously at the young man who had just come in.

"Have you been to see our new play?" inquired M. Pause, beating with his fingers on the mantelpiece as though he were conducting an orchestra. "It seemed to me, however, as though there were a good many pretty things in it."

"Oh, I'm not bothering myself much about your play — it is my picture which is in question, my picture, which is delightful in tone and finish and color —"

"Well, what of it, cousin?"

"Well, it has been refused at the exhibition; I have had certain information to that effect this evening."

"It is refused!"

"Yes, cousin. Neither talent, genius nor a decided vocation for the arts avail one nowadays; it is only schemers who manage to achieve success, who get the emoluments, the honors. But when one is not praised and exalted by a clique one has no chance of having his work accepted; so many obstacles are thrown in one's way, so many things are done to disgust and discourage one in a career where one's success would crush his rivals."

"But, my dear fellow," said M. Pause, trying to beat a tune in trois-temps with his head, "the public is not a clique, and it is the public approval which makes real success, despite the newspaper articles, which are sometimes as incorrect in their assertions about art as they are about politics, and, sooner or later, talent will always tell; but one must

persevere in everything. Look you, I have always passionately loved music,— the 'cello was my idol, I would make 'cellos on the wall with charcoal, I made them everywhere. My father would often say to me, 'You had much better measure off calico than put that big fiddle between your legs; you were born to be behind a counter and not to scrape catgut.' But I felt that I was born for music, so I kept on; my resolution brought many disagreeable things upon me, but at length I dare to say I have attained my end, succeeded; now I am recognized; however, I can say with truth not a single newspaper has ever said a word about me."

Edmond repressed an ironical smile which flickered on his lips, and answered,—

"I have no desire to wait twenty-five to thirty years to acquire a reputation; we live in a century where things move quickly, where people wish to get rich, be prosperous and admired immediately. I want to do as do others. The means are not lacking to me; in music I at once understood the rules of composition."

"Yes, oh, yes; you are sure to be successful, there are some very pretty things in your waltz!"

"Plays! why, I could have produced one a week if they had been accepted — and novels too — do you suppose it is such a difficult matter to write them? they print such bad ones nowadays."

"Certainly, it ought not to be difficult to do anything badly."

Edmond rose and walked about the room.

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"As to my picture, you have seen it, M. Pause; come, answer me, is it not good?"

"There are many good points about it," answered M. Pause, still playing with his fingers.

Edmond rose and walked about the room for a few moments, and appeared to be deeply reflecting. The two young girls were silently working; for one of them was thinking that her marriage would again be put off and the other that she would not be likely to have to wear her pretty bridesmaid's costume very soon. M. Pause also remained silent, contenting himself with beating in andante or presto; as for M. Ginguet, since he had had the misfortune to cut one of Pélagie's scallops he had not known how to sit up in his chair.

Presently Edmond's brow became less anxious, his features became animated, his eyes shone and he exclaimed,—

"Really, I am very foolish to bother myself about their foolish injustice. After all one must be a gull to work and wear himself all out to acquire a talent that our citizens do not know how to appreciate — if they do not deny it, at any rate they will be jealous of it. To put one's self to expense for envious, ungrateful people can anything be more foolish than that? Money — that is the only thing to have, because, having money, everybody will render one all possible honor and endow one with all kinds of merit. Yes, that is decided. I renounce the fine arts, I wish to recognize no other god than

Plutus, to whom I shall offer all my incense. My dear cousin, you won't marry a celebrity, a shining light, but you will marry a millionnaire, and you will have carriages, hotels, diamonds, lackeys."

"What makes you say that, cousin? what new idea is passing through your head?"

"Oh, it is a firmly settled plan now. I want to become very rich. Do you not see stupid and incapable people making their fortunes every day? It seems to me, after all, that if a man with good mental qualifications only wishes to take the trouble, he must surely be able to do the same."

"That is not good reasoning," said Constance, sighing, "besides, cousin, are great riches necessary to one's happiness? We have each of us a modest competency, and I think that ought to suffice us. I have no desire to shine in the world or to eclipse any one."

"And I, cousin, wish you to eclipse all the other ladies in your dress, your diamonds. I want every one to envy my wife's fate; I want them to say, 'Madame Guerval has but to form a wish to have it gratified. Her husband refuses her nothing.' In fact, I have already thought of a way of being successful, and before long I shall lay at your feet my riches and my hand."

"As you please, cousin, but pray remember that your riches will not add to my happiness."

"I should very much like to know how he hopes to make a big fortune so rapidly," said the

honest 'cellist to himself, shaking his head doubtfully.

"M. Ginguet, it seems to me that you also ought to try to become a millionnaire," said Pélagie, looking mischievously at the young clerk, "by that means you would avoid a long career as a supernumerary."

"Me, mademoiselle? I am fortunate in nothing," answered Ginguet, heaving a deep sigh. "What would you like me to undertake?"

"Well, I don't advise you in any case to undertake cutting out — for you certainly are not a brilliant success at that."

The young girl laughed heartily, while the young man lowered his eyes and felt almost ready to cry.

"Children," said M. Pause after a moment, "while we are waiting for M. Edmond to become a member of the Assembly, don't you think we had better go to bed?"

"Good-night, cousin," said Constance, rising and laying aside her work; "we shall see you tomorrow, I hope?"

"Yes, my dear; oh, I shall continue to come, and before long you will see that I am telling you the truth. But it's getting late; aren't you coming, M. Ginguet?"

"Here I am — I'll be with you, I am looking for my hat."

"The same thing occurs every evening," said

Pélagie; "you never know what you have done with your hat."

M. Ginguet knew very well where his shabby felt hat was, but he made a pretence of looking all over the room for it, hoping to have an opportunity of approaching Pélagie to whisper a request for pardon for having cut her scallop; for the lorn bachelor felt that he should not sleep that night if he left the young girl displeased with him.

But Pélagie made a point of not going near Ginguet, and he was obliged to go; Edmond was already on the landing, saying good-by to the ladies and to M. Pause.

Pélagie's voice was heard again, exclaiming in the mocking tone which was natural to her,—

"M. Ginguet, if you don't find your hat, my uncle has decided to lend you one of his cotton nightcaps to wear home."

"I have it, mademoiselle, I have it," answered Ginguet, coming back chopfallen, and with his hat in his hand. "I am sorry to have made you wait at the door — I am very unfortunate this evening — I am so — I —"

"That's enough, M. Ginguet, it is quite time to say good-night; you can tell us the rest another time."

And the door on the landing was closed on the young man, who was bowing confusedly. When he saw that he was bowing to the bare walls, he decided to go down the staircase, sadly muttering,—

"She's very willing to get rid of me! I am very unlucky. I would give everything I possess if only Mademoiselle Pélagie would love me, and when I am near her I do nothing but what is awkward."

The young men had reached the street; there they were to part, for one had to go up the Faubourg and the other went down towards the boulevard. But Ginguet had seated himself on a post which stood beside the house he had just left, and seemed disposed to remain there. Edmond struck him on the arm, saying to him,—

"Good-evening, my dear Ginguet."

"Good-evening, M. Edmond."

"Do you expect to pass the night on that post?"

"I don't know what I shall do — I am so unhappy! Ah, M. Edmond, you don't know what it is to love without hope, you who are certain of possessing your cousin's heart; but I adore an ungrateful, cruel girl with a heart as hard as a rock— I might weep for a fortnight and Mademoiselle Pélagie would not even ask me why my eyes were red."

"Then, it seems to me, you would do much better not to weep."

"Can I help doing so? When Mademoiselle Pélagie has treated me harshly during the evening, I sob all night so loud that my neighbor in the next room has already threatened that she will complain to the superintendent of police because she declares I prevent her from sleeping."

"Poor Ginguet!—good evening, I am going to dream of my plans to make my fortune."

Edmond took himself off, leaving Ginguet seated on the post. At length the lorn bachelor lifted his face and looked up at the windows of M. Pause's apartment, saying to himself,—

"If she would only come to the window, if I could only see her pass with the light."

And he remained thus with neck extended and nose in the air, his eyes fixed on the windows of the fourth story, walking along for some steps and then stopping; and like the astronomer who was looking at the moon and did not see the ditch at his feet, the unfortunate lover, in gazing up at his beloved's windows did not see some stones which had been left near the gutter, which was filled with water, for it had rained during the day.

M. Ginguet stumbled and fell right into the middle of the water, an anything but enticing bath.

But as an unexpected physical sensation always drives away moral sensations, M. Ginguet picked himself up, dripping wet, and immediately turned towards his home without being tempted to gaze longer at Mademoiselle Pélagie's windows.

CHAPTER III

Freaks of Fortune

Four months passed by; Edmond now talked of nothing but the fluctuations of stocks, five per cents and current prices, for his way of making a fortune had simply been that of gambling at the Bourse. He had realized his little property and counted on quadrupling his capital in a short time.

Good M. Pause frowned when he heard how Constance's cousin expected to get rich; but she, always kind, always gentle, would not allow herself to blame her cousin; besides, Edmond was beginning well; he was winning, as is almost always the case when people begin to gamble, and he was therefore delightfully good-tempered when he came to see his cousin. His visits, to tell the truth, were short; and he talked only of sales on time and reduced consols.

M. Ginguet still went on foot and wore his brown frock coat and black waistcoat, which often subjected him to Pélagie's mischievous sarcasm. However, one evening he appeared with a radiant expression and wearing a white waistcoat.

"Something extraordinary must have happened to you, M. Ginguet," said Pélagie immediately,

"you have changed something in your uniform; I do believe you have gone so far as to black your boots this evening."

"I don't believe I ever appear before you, mademoiselle, with untidy clothes or muddy boots. In the first place, I am careful to wipe my boots on all the door mats."

"Come, M. Ginguet, answer me—is it not true that something has happened to you? You are not in your ordinary condition, I even think you are squinting this evening."

"Mademoiselle, I was not aware of it, but pleasure may have caused me to squint; it certainly is the case that I am very pleased; dating from the first of this month I am no longer a supernumerary, but have been appointed to a permanent place."

"You are appointed? why, that is fine! And how much salary are you to have?"

"I have eight hundred francs, mademoiselle."

"Eight hundred francs — per month?"

"Why, the idea! no, by the year, and it seems to me that's very well for a beginning."

"Why, yes," said M. Pause, who had not yet left for the theatre. "That enables a young man to go, not to the opera or to Véfours; but in Paris there are so many ways of living. One may dine perfectly well for twenty-two sous."

"Why, uncle! you'll be saying next that a person may set up housekeeping on an income of eight hundred francs."

"My darling, I have known a clerk who with a salary of twelve hundred francs had a wife and four children, and they all lived on it and did not go into debt by so much as a sou; in fact, nobody would have lent them money or given them credit."

Poor Ginguet breathed not a word; he had fondly hoped that Pélagie, on learning of his appointment, would have treated him a little more kindly, and he found himself again mistaken in his hope. But on going out M. Pause pressed his hand, saying,—

"I offer my congratulations, my dear fellow, my very sincere congratulations — for in my eyes an assured income of eight hundred francs is much better than the pursuit of millions. Good-by; I am going to play for a melodrama in which there are many pretty things."

Accustomed to hearing Edmond Guerval speak only of such sums as fifty and sixty thousand francs, the young girl had not been greatly dazzled by M. Ginguet's new position. In fact, what is a man with eight hundred francs a year in comparison with some one who by a lucky stroke at the Bourse may win fifty times as much. However, Constance, who witnessed the sighs of the poor clerk when he was near Pélagie, often scolded the latter for the manner in which she treated M. Ginguet; but Pélagie would answer,—

"I can say anything I like to him; if he really loves me should he not be only too happy that I

am quite willing he should come every evening? He's not so very entertaining. Sometimes he comes in, sits down and remains for two hours without opening his mouth."

"That's when you take no notice of him when he says good-evening to you. The young man really wants to marry you; if you do not love him, it would be much better to tell him so than to allow him to vainly hope."

"I didn't tell him to hope; well, we'll see. Would you not like to see me marry a clerk on eight hundred francs, so that on Sunday he might feast me at a restaurant for twenty-two sous? Very much obliged! I don't think, as does my uncle, that that would be very nice. I want that M. Ginguet should have the wit to make a fortune like M. Edmond, but he is too heavy, too apathetic for that. You ought to be happy! you will have a hotel, diamonds, a carriage; you'll take me out in your carriage, won't you?"

"Oh, I haven't got one yet."

"How we shall amuse ourselves then. We will go every morning to the Bois-de-Boulogne to Saint-Cloud, to Meudon. When people keep their own carriage they can go where they like. Oh, we'll travel; you shall take me to see the sea."

"Are you mad, my dear Pélagie?"

"Why, I have a great desire to see the ocean—but with a husband who has only eight hundred francs it'll be as much as I can do to go and see

the fountains play in the park at Versailles, and we shall have to take an omnibus to get there. How amusing that will be!"

"Is not one always entertained when one is with the person one loves?"

"That is no reason for swallowing the dust over four miles of road. Oh, Constance, we must have boxes at the play, too; at several plays."

"At the opera too, I suppose?"

"Yes, at the opera and at Franconi's, I like to see the horses. Then you will entertain, you will often give dinners, evening parties, balls — you will have a fine orchestra with cornets, for, you know, my uncle says they play some very pretty things on that instrument now."

"But, my dear Pélagie, you know well that to realize all the plans you have formed one would need a very large fortune indeed!"

"It seems to me that with thirty thousand francs income one might satisfy all one's fancies."

"And do you think that Edmond is going to offer me thirty thousand francs income to spend?"

"Certainly, and perhaps a good deal more. It seems as though your cousin will get rich very quickly; the last time he came he seemed so pleased, so highly satisfied with his speculations. He rubbed his hands together, saying, 'Audaces fortuna!' O mercy, I can't remember the rest. But they were Latin words which certainly must have meant 'I am very rich.'"

"I don't understand them; but I know that my cousin stayed with us only a very short time, and that I thought him a good deal kinder to me before he dreamed of becoming rich."

The evening after this conversation Edmond did not come to M. Pause's. The next evening M. Ginguet came again alone and the young clerk had a singular expression; he was gloomy, seemed embarrassed, and remained near the two friends without saying a word to them.

"You have something the matter with you again this evening," said Pélagie to him; "and although you have not a white waistcoat, your face is quite changed; have they cut down your salary already?"

"Oh, no, mademoiselle — it has nothing to do with me."

"Nothing to do with you? then it becomes more interesting. Come, monsieur, explain yourself."

"It is only that — well, as I came here I met M. Edmond Guerval."

"My cousin?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, your cousin, and he looked as if he was at his wit's end. He was pale, dejected."

"Good heavens! is he ill?"

"No, mademoiselle, he is not ill — but certainly there was something the matter with him. In the first place he took my hand and squeezed it so as to bring tears to my eyes."

"What then, M. Ginguet? what did he do?

You talk to us about your hand and you can see very well that Constance is on thorns!"

"Finally, M. Edmond said to me: 'Are you going to M. Pause's this evening?' On my answering in the affirmative, he drew from his pocket a letter and gave it to me, adding, 'Give that to my cousin from me, don't fail to do so.' I promised to perform his commission, and then he disappeared like a streak of lightning."

"And that letter, M. Ginguet?"

"It is in my pocket, mademoiselle."

"Well, give it to her quickly, why don't you?" said Pélagie; "that's what you ought to have begun by doing."

M. Ginguet presented the letter to Constance, and the latter took it with a trembling hand, and read,—

My Dear Cousin: — I wished to tempt fortune and my first attempts were fortunate. Emboldened by this beginning — perhaps I was so too quickly — however, all the chances seemed in my favor, and I believed I should soon be able to place you in a position worthy of you. But fate betrayed my trustfulness. A dreadful fall in stocks that I could not foresee — how can I tell you? I am ruined. If I had only lost what belongs to me I might still be able to console myself, but I owe nearly double what I possess; I must therefore fail to keep my engagements — and so lose my honor. It is that which throws me into despair! that which kills me. Yes, which kills me! for having lost honor I cannot live. Good-by, my dear cousin, pity me and do not curse me. Good-by forever,

Edmond Guerval.

The letter fell from Constance's hands, she seemed stunned by this unexpected blow.

"Ruined!" muttered Ginguet.

"Ruined!" muttered Pélagie.

But Constance resumed her self-possession, and her first act was to exclaim,—

"Good heavens! he means to die, for he has bidden me good-by forever. To die because he lacks money! Why, does not what I have belong to him? Does Edmond doubt my heart? Oh, I must save him, prevent the execution of his dreadful plan. Pélagie, my hat, quick! my shawl! But what does it matter, I can go as I am. M. Ginguet, will you take me there, give me your arm. Come, oh, come quickly, it's a question of saving Edmond's life."

Constance took the young clerk's arm and made him go down the stairs four at a time. Ginguet jumped and stumbled to keep up with her, as he said,—

"Is he loved, this M. Edmond? Is he loved? Why, if I could only be as dear as that to Mademoiselle Pélagie I should be capable of asphyxiating myself every day."

When they reached the street Constance said to M. Ginguet, as they walked along,—

"Lead me, monsieur, and oh, please, make haste, it would be so cruel to get there too late."

"I will certainly conduct you, mademoiselle, but where do you want me to take you?"

"To Edmond's — you know where he lives?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"If only we find him at home!"

"Ah, that is doubtful."

"In fact, we shall learn perhaps — oh, I must see him."

Ginguet said to himself, "If her cousin is not at home I don't see where we are to look further for him!" But he did not make this reflection to Constance, whose grief and anxiety seemed to increase with each moment.

They reached Edmond's; Constance left her conductor to run and inquire of the porter, for in great trouble one forgets the convenances, and the young girl had no care for what people might think of her in seeing her go to a young man's lodging. Edmond was not at home; he had been out for a long time, and had said nothing to the porter to indicate in which direction he had gone.

Constance felt her breast oppressed by a frightful weight; she returned in despair towards her companion.

"He is not at home, and they don't know where he has gone."

"I was afraid it would be so; when I met him, he did not look at all disposed to go to bed."

"No matter, we must find him; come, M. Ginguet — let us walk on."

"As far as you like, mademoiselle; but where shall we go?"

"To the Bourse."

"Mademoiselle, no one goes to the Bourse in the evening, it is closed."

"Into the cafés, to the play — how do I know where we must go?"

"M. Edmond did not seem to me to be thinking of going to the theatre."

"For all that, monsieur, my cousin must be somewhere, and we must find him."

The young girl led her companion along; they walked haphazard. When a young man of Edmond's height or figure passed them, Constance would exclaim, "There he is!" and she would make M. Ginguet run after the one who had passed them; but M. Ginguet would come back saying,—

"It was not he, and when I got close up it did not look like him at all."

When they passed in front of a café M. Ginguet must go in to it, also, in order that he might ascertain that the one they were looking for was not there.

For three hours Constance scoured Paris with the young clerk, and she felt her hope vanish at each step; she did not weep, but she breathed with difficulty, her forehead was burning, and her gaze fixed and mournful.

M. Ginguet had been into fifty cafés; he had run after twenty passers-by and by some of them he had been ill-received; at last he was ready to drop

with fatigue, but he dared not say so, for the young girl made no complaint, and a man is unwilling to exhibit less courage than a woman, however much he may wish to do so.

The half hour after eleven sounded, and M. Ginguet ventured to say,—

"It is very late; I am afraid M. Pause and Mademoiselle Pélagie will be uneasy about you."

"Did you say it was very late?"

"Half-past eleven."

"Then he must be in."

"M. Pause? Oh, he has certainly got home by now."

"My cousin, I mean, monsieur, it is my cousin whom we are in search of, come, let us go back to his place."

Ginguet dared not refuse, although he thought the errand would be fruitless enough; but as he walked along with Constance he kept repeating to himself,—

"How this man is loved—a fortunate man. And he wishes to kill himself and rails at fate. For all that, there was no need that Love should have been blind!"

They had reached Edmond's house, Constance stopped trembling; at this moment she felt her strength leaving her, for she knew well that if Edmond had not come in she must lose all hope.

She made up her mind, however; she knocked and went in,—

"M. Edmond Guerval has been in about a quarter of an hour," said the porter.

"He is at home!" exclaimed Constance, joyfully. And the young girl immediately went rapidly up the stairs without looking to see that her companion was following her.

It was time that she did so, for Edmond, having passed the evening in walking aimlessly about Paris, reflecting deeply as he did so upon his cruel position, had become convinced that there was no way out of it for him but to commit suicide. Certainly that is a more expeditious way of overcoming one's difficulties than to endeavor to regain what one has lost by means of work, patience and perseverance; but in our time patience, perseverance, and love of work are often rarer than a pistol shot, and yet it is asserted that this is a century of enlightenment and progress. In regard to such conventional matters as eating a dinner properly this may be true; but as respects common sense, I take exception to it.

Edmond, then, had come home firmly resolved to put an end to himself. He had loaded his pistols, then he had placed them on a table near him, and given himself up to mournful regrets for his short career. No doubt his pretty cousin occupied a large share of his thought; at least, the poor child well deserved to.

But at the very moment that Edmond took up the pistol, Constance came into the room, seized

the hand that held the weapon, and threw herself at his feet, exclaiming,—

"Cousin, do you want to kill me also?"

Edmond paused; he looked at his cousin, who was supplicating him with her beautiful eyes; emotion succeeded to despair and he dropped into a chair, muttering,—

"What, do you wish me to live dishonored, Constance? And I shall be if I do not meet my engagements."

"But, cousin, have you forgotten that all I possess is yours. Dispose of my property — I wish it, I exact it, in the name of both our mothers, who loved us so much and were so pleased to look upon you as my protector, as the husband whom Heaven destined for me."

"Constance, what are you thinking of? Do you mean that I should dispose of your fortune? If you only knew! — when I shall have paid all I owe, on account of that unlucky and totally unexpected fluctuation in stocks, you will hardly have anything left."

"And what does that matter — I shall be happy then; do you imagine I should be so in grieving over your death?" cried Constance. "You will accept, Edmond, you must, I wish it — hand me some paper, quick! and the ink, that I may give you a letter to my banker. Oh, I am so pleased that I can hardly write."

And the young girl seated herself at a desk; she

wrote with such evident delight that her cousin standing near her could only silently admire her; a little farther off, in a corner, M. Ginguet was weeping like a child, and murmuring,—

"What an act! what devotion! Here is a man who is really loved! Ah, Mademoiselle Pélagie, how happy I should be if I could only inspire you with a nineteenth part of that love."

Constance had finished writing, Ginguet had ceased to weep. Edmond had consented to receive the help offered by his cousin. They were happy, their troubles were forgotten; they were already making plans for their future happiness, and Constance did not seem to regret the brilliant fortune that her cousin had wished to give her.

M. Ginguet remarked that it was very late; they said good-by, promising to see each other on the following day; then Constance was led back to M. Pause's by her faithful escort, who related at once all that Edmond's cousin had done for him, while the latter, with lowered eyes and confused expression, listened like a criminal who is awaiting his sentence.

Pélagie kissed her friend as she exclaimed,—

"Well, if your cousin does not adore you, if he doesn't make you the happiest of women, he will show himself an ungrateful fellow?"

"I did not think of placing him under an obligation when I did it," said Constance.

As to honest M. Pause, he was much moved

as he listened to the story of the young girl's beautiful action, and when it was ended he came and took her hand and pressed it affectionately between his own.

"My darling," he said in a low tone, "there are many pretty things in what you have done in this matter; but it would have been quite as well if your cousin had not thought of becoming a millionnaire. However, there is no doubt that it will be a good lesson for him, and I presume that he will now decide on adopting some profession."

Edmond, thanks to his cousin's fortune, paid everything that he owed; but when he had done so, there remained to Constance only eight hundred francs income, just as much as Ginguet's salary.

However, the young girl was quite untroubled by the change in her fortune, the only trouble that she experienced was in being obliged to diminish the amount she had been paying M. Pause.

She was treated no less kindly by the honest musician. One may be a very poor musician and still have an excellent heart, which is decidedly a compensation.

CHAPTER IV

The Bringuesingue Family. A Grand Dinner

"I wonder why it is that M. Edmond still defers his marriage with his cousin?" said Pélagie to herself some time after these events. "First he craved glory, then he had a desire for fortune, now—does he not know how to content himself with love?"

Constance said not a word; but it is probable that the same subject occupied her thoughts. Since he had dissipated all his property and that of his cousin, Edmond was often sad and dreamy, often he would say to Constance,—

"What sort of fate can I offer you? I have nothing and I am nothing. What happiness can you hope for in the future with one who seems to be pursued by a fatality?"

And Ginguet said to himself,—

"He doesn't want to marry her because he has nothing; he did not want to marry her when he had something, when is he going to marry her, then? Ah, if only some one loved me, how happy I should be to marry her."

M. Pause had offered Edmond the place of tenor violin in the orchestra at his theatre; for although Constance's cousin was not a distinguished instru-

mentalist, he knew enough of the tenor violin to keep a place in one of the boulevard orchestras.

Edmond had responded to this proposition, "What would that lead up to?"

"Why, you would earn six hundred francs!"

"Why, what the devil do you think I could do with six hundred francs?"

"Why, with it, if you were economical — you could do a little."

"No, M. Pause, I cannot play the second violin for six hundred francs, for instead of giving me some taste for music it would make me a mediocre musician and I should so stay forever. When one knows that one can only earn so little one plays accordingly."

"You are mistaken, my dear fellow; the man who loves his art never makes such calculations, he seeks to acquire skill and often works harder when he earns little than when he is well paid. I could cite you, in support of what I tell you, several of our virtuosos, our great artists, who began in orchestras or in the secondary theatres."

Edmond persisted in refusing the place in the orchestra. Some time after this, honest Pause, who was always looking for some occupation for him, told the young man that he had spoken to one of his friends about him — a manufacturer of paper hangings.

"Do you want me to decorate his paper hangings?" asked Edmond with a bitter smile.

"No, my dear fellow; but I was telling my friend that you could paint very pretty genre pictures; and he begged me to ask you to make him six chimney boards — whatever subjects you like, either interiors or landscapes; he will pay you fifteen francs a piece."

"I paint chimney boards," said Edmond, turning scarlet with anger, "I abase my talent to that point and for fifteen francs. M. Pause, don't think of such a thing."

"Why, my dear fellow, six times fifteen francs are ninety, and besides, what harm is there in painting chimney boards? I know of some of our great painters who are today members of the Institute, who formerly painted signs. Do you think they have less talent today because of that? Everybody knows that artists are obliged to eat like other people and that before working for fame they must work for their stomachs."

"You may say what you like, monsieur, but I shall not paint chimney boards, I would much rather make toothpicks."

"Well, then, my dear fellow, make toothpicks, but at least make something."

Such conversations as these were not at all entertaining to Edmond, and to divert himself after M. Pause's talk Constance's cousin still sometimes went to one of the brilliant gatherings where he had been very much sought after at the time of his speculations on the Bourse, and where he was

still well received, because he had not been the means of ruining anyone, was always dressed with taste, had a pretty carriage, good manners, a thousand means of making himself agreeable, and in Paris one can live for a long time on this basis.

At one of these gatherings of people who had the appearance of being wealthy and of whom some, like Edmond, had not a sou, but where every one was perfectly clad, Constance's cousin became acquainted with the Bringuesingue family, which was composed of father, mother, and daughter.

The father was a little man whose height would have exempted him from the conscription; his head, set rather deeply between his shoulders, his quick eye, his sharp nose, M. Bringuesingue looked as if he wanted to appear jocular and one might have been deceived into thinking he was so.

Following the custom of little men, he had married a very big woman who, as she grew older, had become very stout. She could easily have hidden her husband behind her.

Their daughter took after her father for height and her mother for stoutness. She had been rickety and was rather awkward in her walk. Madame Bringuesingue was taller than her husband and her daughter by a head.

Here you have their physical description, let us now pass to the mental.

M. Vendicien-Raoul Bringuesingue was the son of a mustard manufacturer who had made a great

deal of money, owing to the judicious mingling of different aromatic herbs in the mustards he put up. Thanks to this worthy manufacturer, the daily beef of the bourgeoisie, who still hold to that fundamental dish, had seemed less insipid.

M. Bringuesingue, the son, far from diminishing his father's reputation, had added to it by some fortunate improvements in the manner of pickling gherkins and had rapidly augmented his fortune. But having only one daughter, and being possessed of a noble ambition, at fifty M. Bringuesingue abandoned mustard, gherkins, and everything that smelled of vinegar to throw himself into the whirl of fashion and enjoy his fortune.

M. Bringuesingue having retired entirely from business, had the weakness to wish to make people forget that he had enriched himself thereby. He had a fine apartment in the Chaussée-d'Antin, a man-servant in livery; he gave evening parties, dinners — where they never served mustard so much did he fear reflection — in fact, he endeavored to put on all the airs of a great nobleman.

Madame Bringuesingue was an excellent woman, whose one passion in life had been for dancing, and this she still preserved although she was over forty-five. For the rest she always conformed to her husband's opinions, deeming him a most superior man, and she waited for him to speak before expressing an opinion.

All the affection of the worthy couple was of

course lavished on their daughter, who was their only child. Mademoiselle Clodora had rather regular features and her parents thought no one so beautiful as she. They had given her masters in music, drawing and Italian, dancing and geometry, geography and history; the result of all this was that at sixteen Clodora sang falsely, drew an eye in such a manner that it could easily be mistaken for an ear; her English vocabulary consisted of the word "yes" and her Italian one of the word "signor," she could not dance in time, thought that Basle was in England, and Edinburgh in Switzerland, and quoted Louis XV as having wished that his subjects might put the fowl in the pot. Monsieur and Madame Bringuesingue, who were incapable of perceiving the lapses their daughter made in conversation, incessantly repeated that Clodora had received an excellent education.

However, in receiving company, in entertaining his guests well, not being familiar with the usages of polite society, M. Bringuesingue often found himself very much embarrassed, and neither his wife nor his daughter could tell him what to do. One circumstance which he was quick to profit by served him marvellously well.

His male domestic having been found several times in the cellar completely overcome by drink, M. Bringuesingue had determined to look for another, when one day he heard of the death of a rich nobleman who lived in his neighborhood. The

ex-mustard dealer immediately hastened to his hotel to confer with the count's butler and general factotum.

"Were you in the count's service?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"How much did he give you?"

"Six hundred francs, clothes, board, lodging and frequent gratuities."

"I offer you a thousand francs and the same advantages and, what is more, you shall have an authoritative position in my house, only I shall count on you to give me certain information, that is to say, to remind me as to what is customary—which I have forgotten; having lived a long time in the provinces, I am a little rusty for fine Parisian manners. You who were in the service of the count, who associated with all the best people in the capital, must be acquainted with all those things, must put me in the running."

Comtois, which was the valet's name, accepted M. Bringuesingue's proposition with pleasure; he understood immediately the advantages he would enjoy at his new master's. In fact, Comtois became indispensable to M. Bringuesingue, who never failed to consult his new servant before doing anything.

If he wanted to have a coat built the retired mustard dealer would send for Comtois and question him.

"How did the count have his coats made?"

"In the very latest fashion, monsieur."

"And of what color?"

"According to his fancy."

"Very well."

And M. Bringuesingue, turning towards his tailor, would say to him,—

"Make me a coat in the very latest fashion — the color according to my fancy."

If it was a question of changing the furniture of a drawing-room, of a bedroom, he would call Comtois again.

"What kind of furniture did the count put in his drawing-room?"

"The same as you see everywhere, monsieur, a couch, easy and other chairs and a piano."

Then M. Bringuesingue would send for an upholsterer and order furniture for his drawing-room like that of the count. But it was on reception days and the occasions of grand dinners that Comtois became a valuable man; it was he who drew up the menu of the repast, who ordered the manner in which it should be served, the moment of rising from table, the manner of taking coffee; he it was, also, who directed how the drawing-room should be lighted, where they should put the card tables, how they should greet and receive their company; in fact, it was he who ordered everything, and any one who had come when he was making his arrangements might easily have taken the master for the servant.

Despite the lessons which he received every day from Comtois, M. Bringuesingue still feared that he should commit some awkwardness before company and had settled on a sign between himself and his servant. When his master did anything unconventional in good company or anything which infringed the rules of etiquette Comtois scratched his nose, and M. Bringuesingue, who nearly always had his eyes on his valet, was then warned that he was leaving the good road, and tried to repair his foolishness.

This was the Bringuesingue family, who enjoyed twenty-five thousand livres income at the time when Edmond Guerval made their acquaintance.

Fortune destined that the young man should play the piano for Mademoiselle Clodora to dance with her mamma, that she might not miss her contra-dance, and by some mistake he called the papa M. "de" Bringuesingue. When he had done this, he was found charming by the whole family. Besides, Constance's cousin had all those superficial qualities which suffice to please in society; he played the piano well enough for people to dance to; he sang, he could draw caricatures of everybody in the company with facility, in fact, he had assurance, he talked on every subject, even though he did not understand it he spoke trenchantly, decidedly, or he turned it into ridicule. This is more than is necessary in society to impose upon fools or even, sometimes, on men of

talent. Edmond, being invited to go to Bringuesingue's did so; and when he had left, the master of the house said to his servant,—

"What do you think of that young man?"

"I think well of him, monsieur; he has good manners and is distinguished-looking."

"Comtois thinks he's distinguished-looking," said M. Bringuesingue to his wife, in speaking of Edmond. "I want to invite that young man to dinner. I should like him to come often to our house."

"We must give a little ball — he dances very well."

"He called me De Bringuesingue; I don't know whether he thinks I look like a nobleman."

"Probably he does, my dear."

Mademoiselle Clodora said nothing, though I do not affirm that she thought the same; however, she seemed very pleased that Edmond was pleasing to her parents.

Some days later M. Bringuesingue gave a grand dinner and young Guerval was invited. There were some men from financial circles and a large sprinkling of adventurers, parasites with good manners who for a dinner are always ready to fling incense before any one; then there were some artists and some military men, but no shopkeepers; the Bringuesingue family no longer associated with people of that ilk.

Upon this occasion Madame Bringuesingue was

attired in a gown that was too short and exposed her shoes, which pinched her dreadfully, but she hoped to dance, and expected to make a sensation at the ball. Mademoiselle Clodora held herself as straight and stiff as a ramrod, in order to give herself importance, and her father walked about, not daring to take his eyes off Comtois whenever he wanted to do or say anything.

Everything was ordered to please and gratify the company, and M. Bringuesingue looked complacently around his drawing-room, which was furnished precisely as had been that of the deceased count, and said to himself,—

"There is nothing there that smells of mustard!"

Every time the bell rang, M. Bringuesingue had the habit of running towards the antechamber, but Comtois pulled him back by his coat tail.

"Monsieur," said the servant, "you should await your guests in your drawing-room, and not go forward to meet every one."

"Very well, Comtois. I won't stir from my drawing-room. But what must I do when we go to dinner?"

"Then you will take a lady's hand and lead the procession."

"Very well, Comtois; and then shall I seat myself at the table the first?"

"No, you will first of all seat the lady you take in, on your right; and you will choose another to

sit at your left. Madame will do the same with two gentlemen."

"Well, but don't they write the names of the guests on some cards?"

"No, monsieur, that is old-fashioned — common; it is not done now. The remainder will place themselves according to their fancy. Of course it is still easy for you to indicate certain places to certain people, so they may be near those with whom they are most congenial."

"I understand, Comtois, I quite understand all that. Besides, I shall always have an eye on your nose and if I should be about to commit a blunder you will warn me."

"Yes, monsieur."

The company came. M. Bringuesingue greeted people exactly as his servant had taught him; Madame Bringuesingue made a grimace at each person who came in, because she had to get on her feet and her shoes caused her continual suffering; but generally speaking they thought she was smiling; Mademoiselle Clodora stood as straight as a Cossack officer and the whole company exchanged the customary compliments, not one word of which they meant — which is also customary.

Edmond Guerval accepted the invitation which he had received; for the evening before M. Pause had proposed that he should copy some author's manuscripts, and that had put him in such a bad temper that he had great need of distraction.

They went to take their places at the table, and either by chance or intention they placed Edmond beside Mademoiselle Clodora.

The first course passed off very well; the guests were amiable, the food well cooked and served, and M. Bringuesingue was delighted with himself, for Comtois had not once put his finger to his nose.

At the second course, M. Bringuesingue, feeling more at his ease, wished to touch glasses in drinking his wife's health. As he held out his glass to his neighbor, he saw that Comtois was scratching his nose; the retired mustard dealer remained motionless, daring neither to withdraw nor tender his glass; then he stammered,—

"I offered to touch glasses — however I know very well that that is not done now — people in good society do not touch glasses — it is bad form."

But Edmond interrupted M. Bringuesingue, exclaiming,—

"And why should not this old custom, which was held in such high esteem by our good ancestors — now-a-days people want everything to be Gothic, after the style of the middle ages — why should we not do as to the customs of our tables as we attempt to do in our costumes? Really, M. Bringuesingue, your idea is a very good one, and you ought to congratulate yourself on having entered the lists. Come, gentlemen, let us clink our glasses, let us do things in knightly fashion."

M. Bringuesingue was delighted that his young

guest should have skilfully retrieved his error; they touched their glasses and drank to the happy thought of the master of the house, and that which would have been ridiculous became a mark of good taste, because a young man, suspecting nothing, had applauded instead of laughed at it.

The dessert arrived, M. Bringuesingue, who now felt very cheerful and who was quite proud of having successfully renewed an ancient custom, proposed a little song.

As he was going to set the example and let them hear a little couplet he looked at Comtois; the latter was rubbing his nose of set purpose.

M. Bringuesingue remained with his mouth open, he looked like a china image and every one was expecting him to begin. But instead of singing M. Bringuesingue said,—

"I proposed to you to sing, but it was only a joke — I know very well that people no longer sing at table, it is no longer the custom — and then I don't know any songs —"

"By Jove! Monsieur de Bringuesingue, here you are again with your scruples. You are really too strict an observer of etiquette. Does not the custom of singing at the table also date from the good old times when they at once turned everything into a song or ballad? Why should we of today not do the same? We have touched our glasses, we may very well sing, for one thing accords with the other. We do but resume the

fashions of our ancestors. I wager it will come into fashion yet like the ball costume. I am quite willing, I will sing you 'Bonne Esperance,' a new ballad by Frederic Berat, the author of 'Ma Normandie' and so many other charming productions, and at table as well as in the drawing-room, I am sure it will afford you pleasure."

Edmond sang and was highly applauded, another young man did the same, a lady willingly sang and another followed her; in short every one wanted to sing, and M. Bringuesingue was very much delighted with Edmond, who had so skilfully turned his awkwardness into bright ideas.

After they had had enough singing they went into the drawing-room. There the card tables were being arranged; but M. Bringuesingue did not like cards. However, they could not dance, for as yet there were not enough people; but, although Madame Bringuesingue was as lame as possible, she had already placed herself several times and called for a vis-à-vis, they could not form a contra-dance, for most of the guests preferred bouillotte to ladies' chain.

To amuse his wife and daughter, M. Bringuesingue saw nothing better than to propose a game of hot cockles, and the host had already got down on his knees, and was going to offer his back when he saw his valet in a corner of the drawing-room who, while putting candles on a table and disposing seats, scratched his nose continually.

M. Bringuesingue remained on his knees before the company, but he did not offer a back, and when he had again looked at Comtois he decided to pick himself up, saying,—

"No, I really think it would be very bad form to play hot cockles. We must leave such puerile amusements to the good bourgeois of the Rue Saint-Denis — but in the Chaussée-d'Antin —"

Edmond who had been about to take part in the parlor games, having his own reasons for avoiding cards, again interrupted his host, saying,—

"Well, is no one free to do as he likes, to amuse himself in the Chaussée-d'Antin? As for me, I think these simple games are far better than bouillotte and écarté! They make one laugh and one loses no money at them — both of which are beneficial results. Besides, our greatest men have been fond of the most frivolous recreations. Cardinal Richelieu used to exercise himself in his garden by jumping with his feet close together; Cato was very fond of dancing; Antiochus played charades with Cleopatra; and good King Henri IV used to walk on all fours with his children on his back."

"If Henri IV walked on all fours," said M. Bringuesingue, "I don't see why Comtois rubbed his nose when I got down on my knees. They may play hot cockles with my hearty consent."

Edmond had already taken the place of the master of the house; he held his hand on his back

and each one struck it, laughing heartily, for people laugh a good deal in these little simple games. This diversion was prolonged for some time to the immense gratification of Mademoiselle Clodora and her father. However, several persons having arrived to increase the gathering, Madame Bringuesingue, who was longing to dance and who did not wish to suffer all day in her shoes without having her little feet admired in the evening, found a way to organize a contra-dance and begged Edmond to take his place at the piano.

Constance's cousin did not allow her to ask him twice; he played several quadrilles. Madame Bringuesingue was indefatigable; she had no sooner finished one dance than she looked for a partner to begin again. As gentlemen were not very numerous in the dance, M. Bringuesingue decided to invite his wife to dance with him, a thing he had not done for a long time.

But the ex-mustard dealer got mixed up in the figures sometimes and in one of them, when they were playing the music of the "Puritan" quadrille, which, no doubt, he took for "The Little Milkmaid," he ran after the lady who was advancing and retreating opposite him and tried to kiss her.

The lady tried to escape M. Bringuesingue's arms, but the latter was pursuing her with great leaps when at the entrance to the drawing-room he saw Comtois scratching his nose fit to make it bleed.

M. Bringuesingue stopped with one leg in the

air and his arm curved. Finally, he decided to place his foot on the floor and exclaimed,—

"I really don't know what I am thinking of! I am so stupid. I thought we were dancing 'The Little Milkmaid,' but they don't dance that now —it's bad form."

"Pardon me, M. de Bringuesingue," said Edmond without leaving the piano, "they ought to dance it again, for old airs are again in favor since Musard has written a gothic quadrille — and that was a happy thought of yours to dance 'The Little Milkmaid'; you will put it into fashion again."

After finishing the "Puritan" quadrille, Edmond began to play "The Little Milkmaid" in such a hearty fashion that all were compelled to dance the figure that the host had begun.

"Decidedly this young man is a good deal sharper than Comtois," said M. Bringuesingue; "the one does nothing but scratch his nose to warn me that I am doing something stupid, and the other turns everything so that all I do is bright and clever. He calls me 'De Bringuesingue.' Those who hear will do the same, and little by little the 'de' will become a part of my name, which will end in making a nobleman of me. Oh, if I always had this young man near me I should conduct myself much better in society."

CHAPTER V

A Proposition. Self-sacrifice

Everybody had gone, and the Bringuesingue family, finding themselves alone, were unsparing in their praises of Edmond Guerval, for, apart from all the good turns he had rendered the master of the house, he had played the piano and engaged in the game of hot cockles in so very obliging a manner that the mother and daughter were delighted with him.

Meanwhile, M. Bringuesingue gave himself up more than ever to his mania for playing the nobleman, and went a good deal into such society as his twenty-five thousand francs income gained him admission to; but Edmond was not always there to repair the ex-mustard dealer's mistakes, and then the latter, being duly warned by his servant, did not know how to get out of his predicaments.

Finally, at a grand dinner given by an advocate, to which M. Bringuesingue had been invited, he fell into so many blunders that Comtois' nose, by dint of scratching, was as red as a cherry; and on their return home the master quarrelled with his servant.

"I cannot cut my bread or ask for a little more

soup," said M. Bringuesingue to Comtois, "without seeing you touch your nose. It disturbs me and embarrasses me, and I don't know what I am doing."

"No one cuts his bread or asks for more soup," said Comtois, "it is very bad form; you told me to warn you when you did unconventional things, and I did warn you. It's not my fault that you are always doing them."

"If M. Edmond had been there he would have managed it so that instead of having done something foolish, I should have done something very witty. That restores my self-confidence, my assurance, and enables me to make myself amiable again; but you bother me, and I don't know where I am."

"Confound it, monsieur, it is not very entertaining to me to be so often obliged to warn you that you are committing a solecism. Since I have been in your service my nose has grown one-third larger."

"That is not true!"

"I must have an increase of a hundred crowns or I can't stay with you."

"You have a thousand crowns from me now, and you do hardly anything but scratch your nose; it seems to me that is quite enough, and I shall not increase it."

"Then I shall leave you, monsieur."

M. Bringuesingue allowed his servant to go with-

out regrets; since he had seen Edmond applaud all that Comtois blamed, the count's valet had lost much merit in his sight; on the other hand young Guerval had become indispensable, and nearly every day the Bringuesingue family sent him invitations.

When Comtois was dismissed M. Bringuesingue said to himself,—

"Although I have acquired very good manners, I feel that sometimes I am still a little embarrassed in society. M. Edmond is the only person who knows how to present my actions there in an advantageous light. If that young man was always with us I should always do the right thing and should be taken altogether for a gentleman; now how can I attach M. Edmond to us. Hang it! I can give my daughter in marriage to him. The young man has confessed to me that unfortunate speculations have deprived him of his fortune; but he is very gentlemanly and accustomed to good society, moreover, he always calls me De Bringuesingue. I have but one daughter, and I greatly prefer that she should marry a gentlemanly man, whose fortune she would make, than a rich clown, whose manners would be bad and who would always be joking me about mustard or mushrooms."

M. Bringuesingue imparted his plan to his wife, who jumped for joy; for, with a son-in-law who played so well on the piano, she hoped to be able to dance every day. Clodora was also informed of their project, and, like a submissive girl, she

curtseyed and answered that she would obey her parents with pleasure.

It only remained, therefore, to sound the young man. M. Bringuesingue, who did not doubt but what Edmond would be only too happy to marry his daughter, undertook to inform him what he wished to do for his happiness.

He invited Edmond to lunch tête-à-tête with him, and at dessert he rubbed his hands as he said to his guest,—

"My dear fellow, you are of good family, I know; you have received a fine education, that is easily seen; you have wit, and that goes a long way with me; so, although you have no fortune, I wish to ensure your happiness. With this in view, I will give you my daughter in marriage. She is my only child; I have twenty-five thousand livres income; I shall give her half of it; we will all live together, and you shall manage the house."

Edmond was astonished at this offer, which was quite unexpected to him. He remained for some moments silent, uncertain; at length he remembered his cousin and answered,—

"I am greatly moved and flattered by your proposition, monsieur, but — I cannot marry."

"You cannot marry? Perhaps you are already married?"

"No, monsieur."

"In that case I don't see what is to prevent your marrying my daughter."

"Monsieur, I deeply regret the fact, but —"

"But just think of it, my dear fellow! Mademoiselle Clodora Bringuesingue is a splendid match—"

"That is exactly why —"

"Oh, I understand—delicacy on your part; you want to be rich also, and not owe everything to your wife. But I must tell you again, that we care nothing for that. To make money is not the only consideration; fie! we'll leave that to parvenus; a distinguished appearance and the manners of good society, that is what I consider. You suit me; I have sent Comtois off, I want to follow your advice only. From this moment look upon yourself as one of the family — oh, I don't want to hear anything; reflect upon it, and you will find that you cannot refuse my daughter."

Edmond left M. Bringuesingue; and the proposition the latter had made him became from that time forth the continual subject of his reflections.

While all this was passing Constance, who had sacrificed her fortune to her cousin, worked assiduously and without complaint beside Pélagie, who continued to tease M. Ginguet.

Constance wept sometimes, it is true, but it was in the silence of the night when no one could see her tears or hear her sobs, for the young girl could see that every day her cousin abridged his visits to M. Pause's; and when he was with her, instead of talking to her with the freedom that love permits,

Edmond remained cold, cautious, and sometimes even said nothing. At first Constance had attributed this to the mortification which her cousin might experience at his reverses of fortune, but in the depths of her heart something said to her,—

"If he loved me as I love him would he not have something else to think about but the loss of his money? Am I, then, nothing to him? and, since I am left to him, why should he not be happy?"

Pélagie no longer dared to mention her bridesmaid's costume; M. Ginguet himself dared not sigh aloud, for he feared that it might grieve Constance to hear him speak of love in her hearing, when the one she loved so much never spoke of it to her. As for good M. Pause, he was continually looking for employment of some kind for Edmond, and often had something to propose to him; but in order that he might not have to listen to the old musician Edmond always left before he came back from the theatre.

Several days passed, during which Edmond did not come regularly; then his visits became shorter than usual, and he was even more absent-minded and preoccupied.

"There is certainly something the matter with your cousin," said Pélagie one evening to Constance; "he comes here to sit down in a corner and sigh, and hardly speak. No doubt he has some new plan in his head, he wants to make himself

rich again, and to surprise you with handsome presents when he marries you. I'll wager he thinks of that incessantly."

Constance shook her head and made no reply to this. Presently came M. Ginguet, who said to the young girls,—

"I know now why M. Edmond is so often in a brown study. I met him this morning and we talked together for a long time. When young men get together they talk about their affairs."

"For mercy's sake, M. Ginguet, come to the point."

"M. Edmond mentioned the Bringuesingue family to me, he goes there very often. They are very rich people — retired business people — who have only one daughter — a rather nice-looking young person — but she halts a little when she walks."

"What, then, M. Ginguet?"

"Finally, Edmond said to me, 'You can't imagine, my dear fellow, what M. Bringuesingue has proposed to me?' 'By Jove, no, I can't,' I replied, 'in the first place, I am not very good at guessing. I have never so much as guessed a charade or a rebus.'"

"Oh, M. Ginguet, you abuse our patience," said Pélagie.

"Excuse me, mademoiselle, I am only repeating our conversation to you. 'Well,' said Edmond, 'M. Bringuesingue has offered me his daughter in marriage.'"

"Daughter?" said Constance, changing color.

"You are telling a falsehood, M. Ginguet," said Pélagie; "M. Edmond could not have told you that."

"I swear to you, mademoiselle, that it is the exact truth. But don't grieve over it, Mademoiselle Constance, for your cousin added, 'You may well imagine, my dear Ginguet, that I refused. Although I haven't a sou, and Mademoiselle Clodora is rich, I could not accept, for I am bound to my cousin by friendship, gratitude, and duty. I look upon her already as my wife. Our mothers betrothed us and—' Good heavens, mademoiselle! are you ill?"

Constance, in truth, could not support herself; she had let her head fall back on her chair and seemed about to lose consciousness; Pélagie supported her, and made her inhale some salts, saying meanwhile to M. Ginguet,—

"A nice thing for you to come and tell that! oh, what a gossip you are! and you never have anything but bad news to tell."

"Why, mademoiselle, there's nothing bad in that news; on the contrary, M. Edmond has not the slightest intention of marrying anyone but his cousin."

"All the same, you shouldn't have told that to Constance."

As the latter opened her eyes, Ginguet exclaimed again,—

"I assure you, mademoiselle, upon my honor, that your cousin said to me: 'If they were to offer me a woman with a million, I would not take her —because I cannot. I look upon myself as bound to my cousin—and I am incapable of failing in my duty. I would not accept a princess or a duchess, an honest man can but keep his word.'"

"That is right—that's right, M. Ginguet. I thank you for having told me all this."

"It gives you pleasure, does it not, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, I am very glad to know it."

Poor Constance spoke no more during the remainder of the evening, despite all Pélagie's efforts to enliven and all M. Ginguet's attempts to cheer her by exclaiming from time to time,—

"M. Edmond Guerval is an honest young man, he would refuse the possessor of a gold mine for a wife—he looks upon himself as bound to his cousin."

Pélagie nudged Ginguet and kicked him under the table to silence him every time he adverted to the subject.

When Constance found herself alone in her room she felt she could abandon herself to her sorrow, for the young girl was under no delusion; she felt sure that if her cousin had refused the rich match that had been proposed to him it was because he believed himself bound to her to such an extent that he could not dispose of himself.

"But it is not love for me that causes him to refuse another," said Constance to herself; "oh, no, for if my cousin loved me he would not be so sad and dreamy when with me. He will fulfil his duty in marrying me, that is all, and he will be unhappy — doubly unhappy because I shall have prevented his enjoying the brilliant future which opens out before him. But, because I was once able to oblige him, does he suppose that I wish to be an obstacle to his fortune, that I shall exact from his gratitude the sacrifice of his liberty, his future. I love Edmond too deeply to be willing to deprive him of all the advantages he would find in such a union as the one that is proposed to him. What does it matter if I die of grief later on, provided that my cousin is happy? What if I should tell him he is free, and advise him to marry this Mademoiselle Clodora?—he would not obey me. Oh, no, I know Edmond—he would be fearful of causing me pain. My God! how can I manage so that he may think himself free to marry without grieving me? It is necessary, yes, absolutely necessary, that he should believe that I no longer love him."

All night poor Constance wept and tried to think by what means she could make her cousin believe that she had ceased to love him, in order that he might not think he was acting badly in marrying some one else.

Towards morning she had conceived a plan which could not fail to accomplish the end she had

in view. It was hardly light when she sat down to write a draft of a letter; then, as soon as it was time to go out, she went to a public scribe and had him write the letter from her copy, dictated the address to him, and, with a full heart, hardly able to breathe, she directed her steps towards a pillar post to drop into it the fatal letter.

The young girl was trembling and hardly had the strength to walk along the street; several times she passed a letter box and could not make up her mind to drop the letter into it; she felt that the happiness of her whole life would go with it. It was her future and the illusions of her youth that she was going to sacrifice; her portion would be tears and the memory of a fine action, and at twenty years a great deal of courage is necessary for the accomplishment of so great a sacrifice. There are many people who live and die without the ability to understand such actions.

However, the morning was passing, and Constance had not yet dropped her letter into the post; she scolded herself for her weakness and running towards a box which she saw at the door of a café, she tremblingly dropped into it the missive she had dictated. But, then, a mist obscured her sight, and she was obliged to sit down for a moment on a stone bench which stood near.

This bench she recognized as one on which she had rested on that evening when in M. Ginguet's company she had scoured all Paris in search of

Edmond and had obliged her companion to go into all the cafés they had passed. This remembrance brought fresh tears to her eyes, for in looking for Edmond then she had not thought that one day she would voluntarily renounce his love.

But the sacrifice was not yet complete. Constance remembered that she needed a great deal of courage for the part she had yet to perform; and summoning all her strength she rose from the bench and went home.

During the course of the day Edmond, who was at home and alone, was reviewing his situation, his cousin's love, and M. Bringuesingue's proposition when the porter carried up to him a letter which the postman had just brought.

Edmond glanced at the writing, which he did not know, and he carelessly took it out of its envelope like one who expects neither good nor bad news.

The letter bore no name, but Edmond's face changed as he read these words,—

You believe that your cousin Constance loves you, but you are mistaken; for a long time past her heart has been given to another. If you doubt what is here written, go between seven and eight o'clock this evening to the boulevard Saint-Martin near the Château-d'Eau; you will see your inconstant cousin awaiting your fortunate rival there. Adieu,

ONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN YOUR WELFARE.

"Constance loves another!" said Edmond, angrily crushing the letter in his hands. "That is

a shameful calumny—the writer of this letter is a wretch! Constance, who is a model of virtue and who has given me such great proofs of her attachment—Constance deceives me! for it would be deceiving me, her future husband. But it was an anonymous letter, and only mischievous persons write those; persons who really wish to do any one a service are not afraid to sign their names."

However, even while he said this, Edmond felt agitated, uneasy; calumny, even when utterly absurd, always finds a way of disturbing our peace. And—singular effect of passion and of true love in the hearts of men—Edmond, who a few moments previously thought but coldly and gloomily of his union with his cousin; Edmond, who when certain that she loved him had taken so little trouble to show her that he returned her love,—Edmond felt jealously and passionately in love with Constance now that he thought she could love another. He walked agitatedly about his room, rereading the note, which at first he had thrown on the floor; he repeated all he had before said as to the little reliance one should place in an anonymous letter, but from time to time he exclaimed,—

"However, what could be the object of the writer in sending me this letter? Constance for some time past has neither spoken of our marriage nor of love—it is true that I have not spoken to her on those subjects either. I have nothing, no

occupation, no future; she may have thought of this, and some one has advised her to forget me. But Constance loved me so dearly! No, it is impossible! And then this appointment in the evening, near the Château-d'Eau; she has never done anything of that sort, it is an odious lie. But, as the writer says, I can assure myself as to whether it is true or not with my eyes. Why, it would be an insult to Constance were I to go there, I should not see her. Some one is making game of me. No, I shall certainly not go to assure myself as to the truth of what they have written to me."

As he thought thus, time passed slowly for Edmond. He often looked at his watch, he was impatient for the approach of the hour that had been mentioned to him. He could not eat his dinner for he was not hungry; he longed for the evening, and at seven o'clock was on the boulevard near the Château-d'Eau, although he still kept repeating that he should be wrong to go there.

A quarter of an hour rolled by, Edmond had seen no one who in the least resembled his cousin; his heart dilated, and he breathed more freely, as he said,—

"By Jove; how can any one put faith in anonymous letters? Those who write them ordinarily deserve all the threats, all the epithets they address to others."

Suddenly Edmond perceived a woman whose figure recalled that of Constance. He waited, he

stopped, he felt a frightful weight oppressing his chest. It was almost dark; this woman was advancing with a faltering step, often looking behind her as though she feared she was followed; all of which indicated that she had come to meet some one. Edmond could hardly breathe, for the woman passed by him and, despite the bonnet which hid her face, he recognized Constance.

"It is she!" said he, "it is she! they did not deceive me. But no, I can't believe it, even now; my eyes are deceiving me — I must hear her voice."

And Edmond immediately ran after the person who had just passed; he reached her, he took her arm. She turned her head; it was indeed Constance and she was so pale and trembling, so agitated at seeing her cousin, that it all added to the appearance of her guilt.

The young girl stammered, "Edmond, is it you?" and covered her face with her handkerchief.

"Yes, it is I," answered Edmond in furious tones; "it is I whom you have deceived — whom you no longer love. Be frank, cousin; tell me what you are here for alone — in the evening. What! you are silent? you can find nothing to say to me? — you are overwhelmed? Then it is really true, Constance; another man has your love, and it was he whom you hoped to find here?"

"I do not seek to deny it," answered Constance in a hardly audible voice. "Yes, cousin, you are now aware of the truth. I have ceased to love you.

For a long time past I have wanted to tell you so, but I dared not. Forgive me — and forget me. Good-by, Edmond, it is useless for us to meet again."

As she finished these words, Constance fled. It was time the poor little thing should depart, for sobs were stifling her voice; and, if Edmond had not been blinded by jealousy he would have thought it very singular that his cousin should have wept so bitterly when she told him that she had ceased to love him.

But Edmond had heard, had understood but one thing, and that was that his cousin had ceased to love him, and that for a long time she had wanted to confess it to him. Edmond felt his heart wounded, for he had believed in Constance's love; and it was perhaps this positive certainty, this too great confidence in a love which dated from infancy which had stifled and almost extinguished in his breast the tender feeling he had had for his cousin. One goes to sleep in the certainty of a perfect happiness, but one is wakeful when one has some uneasiness as to its possession.

Stunned by the blow he had received, Edmond remained on the boulevard; he had allowed his cousin to depart without making the slightest effort to detain her.

"But why should I detain her," thought he, as he looked sadly around him; "has she not said that it would be useless for us to meet again?"

A throng of reflections assailed Edmond; in a moment he recalled all his past conduct, his indifference, his coldness to Constance, the impediments he had put in the way of their marriage, the successive delays, when he had been engaged for so long to be his cousin's husband; his plans for acquiring fame and fortune, which had only resulted in his ruin, and which he never would have formed had he been contented with a happiness more real than anything he now had in prospect.

"I have lost Constance's heart through my own fault," said Edmond to himself sighing; "my conduct has been very bad — I have much with which to reproach myself — however, had she loved me as much as I thought she did, she would have forgiven me all that."

But spite and jealousy again took possession of his soul.

"What a fool I am," he exclaimed, "to grieve, to give myself up to regrets, I must forget her as soon as possible. A brilliant future is offered me, which nothing now prevents me from accepting. In the midst of the pleasures which fortune will bring I will lose the remembrance of my unfaithful cousin."

He called her unfaithful who had sacrificed to him all she possessed. But jealousy is ever unjust; it stifles and extinguishes gratitude; indeed, there are not a few people who have no need of jealousy to make them ungrateful.

Edmond went in search of M. Bringuesingue, and without further preamble he called to him as soon as he saw him,—

"Monsieur, I have changed my mind; I have decided on accepting your daughter's hand, and whenever you like I will become your son-in-law."

"By Jove! my dear fellow, I was quite sure it would end in this way, you could not seriously think of refusing Clodora, for she has received an excellent education, and will some day or other have an income of twenty-five thousand livres, you deserve that I should reproach you for having seemed to hesitate for a moment even — but, since you have consented, it is needless, I do not want to scold you, that would be serving the mustard after the dinner. Oh, by Jove! how did I come to say that? That proverb is in the worst possible taste — I don't know what I can be thinking of. I meant to say that—there, I don't know what I meant to say. Kiss me, son-in-law, and come and kiss your mother-in-law and your future wife."

Edmond allowed himself to be led to the person he was going to call his wife, and while kissing her he thought of his cousin and sighed deeply. The image of Constance never left him for a moment; it was graven in the depths of his heart, it followed him everywhere; in vain he sought to get rid of it, to distract himself — his cousin was ever in his mind's eye, so beautiful, so good, so loving! He saw her as she was when her mother united

them, saying, "Here is your betrothed wife"; he saw her again throwing herself at his knees, and staying his hand at the moment when, in despair, he was trying to take his life.

"My God! what a treasure I have lost," he said to himself, "and I hardly took the trouble to think about her when I was sure of possessing her."

But all these reflections did not prevent his marriage to Mademoiselle Clodora Bringuesingue at the expiration of a fortnight.

CHAPTER VI

Marriage

Pélagie and her uncle were surprised that Edmond no longer came to M. Pause's house, they could not account for his conduct.

Although greatly changed and suffering deeply since the evening on which she had gone to the Château-d'Eau, Constance hid her trouble; she endeavored to lock her grief in the depths of her heart, and she never pronounced her cousin's name. When Pélagie blamed him, which happened nearly every evening, as it grew late without Edmond appearing, Constance would answer quietly,—

"If my cousin no longer comes to see us, it is probably because he is otherwise engaged — or pleasure calls him elsewhere. Why should you wish him to come and bore himself here with us, when he has a thousand opportunities to distract himself in society?"

"To bore himself with us! Why should your cousin feel bored when with you, to whom he owes everything — his honor, his existence? with you who are so good to him? with you whom he is going to marry? Really, Constance, I cannot understand the tranquillity with which you bear your

cousin's unworthy neglect. In your place — I should write to him : ' Monsieur, you are a wretch, you are an ungrateful, ill-bred man ! ' "

" Why, Pélagie, do you think that is the way to bring back a wandering heart ? "

" No," murmured M. Ginguet, as he turned over the leaves of a book, " one should never write such things as that. It is very unconventional."

" M. Ginguet, I didn't ask your opinion, I repeat, M. Edmond is an ungrateful wretch, and is treating his cousin shamefully."

" Perhaps you may be wrong in blaming him, my dear Pélagie; you do not know, no, you can't know what motives are actuating him. My cousin is free to do as he pleases ; I should be sorry for him to think, because I once obliged him, that he must be the slave of his gratitude. Our parents wished that we should marry, it is true, but we have lost them, and since that time many events have transpired. It seems to me that I ought to regard those plans of our youth as a dream, and Edmond probably looks upon it in that light also."

" That is different ! If you think your cousin is right not to come and see you, not even to inquire whether you are alive, then, I have nothing more to say — and I should be wrong to blame him."

Pélagie said nothing more. She did not speak of Edmond for some time after this ; but in the depths of her heart she felt her impatience, her

anger increase; for she was sure that Constance was concealing the grief she experienced at her cousin's neglect. What else could it be that had made her so dreamy, so sad, and which had faded the pink color from her cheeks, formerly so fresh and round and which now had grown so thin and so frightfully pale?

Pélagie, who was dying to know what had become of Edmond, had several times said secretly to M. Ginguet,—

"Try to learn what he is doing, what has become of him; inquire about him, go to his lodging, and tell me what you learn."

M. Ginguet had obeyed Mademoiselle Pélagie, but up to this time had learned nothing except that Edmond was not living at his former lodging.

One evening when the two young girls were plying their needles beside M. Pause, who had been kept from the theatre by a slight attack of gout, M. Ginguet arrived looking quite upset and with his eyes starting out of his head. His emotion was so evident that good M. Pause, who ordinarily noticed nothing, was the first to say to him,—

"My dear fellow, have you also been seized with an attack of gout on the way here?"

"No, monsieur, no — but I would much rather have the gout — I would much rather have — I don't know what I wouldn't rather have than —"

"Have you lost your place?" inquired Constance.

"No, mademoiselle, on the contrary, I expect shortly to have my salary increased — raised to twelve hundred francs. My superiors are very well satisfied with me."

"Then what makes you look so scared?" said Pélagie, unmindful of the signs Ginguet made to her when Constance was not looking.

"Why, because I've learned some news, frightful news — it is shameful! after what he said to me that other time too. After all, it is perhaps quite as well that Mademoiselle Constance should know it."

"I?" said Constance fixing her eyes on the young clerk, while Pélagie, who was beginning to divine the nature of the news was making signs to Ginguet to be silent. But the latter was exasperated and would not be silenced; he walked up and down the room, striking the furniture with his fists as he repeated,—

"Yes, it is shameful! it is conduct quite unworthy of a man who has the least spark of gallantry; one has engagements or one has not, and if one has them he ought to respect them. One should not trifle with love; in my opinion, there is nothing that is more worthy of respect. I know people think me foolish, but, all the same, I would rather be foolish than insensitive."

"My dear fellow!" said M. Pause, "there are many pretty things in what you have just said; but that does not put us in possession of facts,

and Constance, as well as the rest of us, is impatient that you should explain yourself more clearly."

"Well, then, Monsieur Pause — it is — I learned this evening that mademoiselle's cousin is married to Mademoiselle Clodora Bringuesingue."

"Married!" burst from uncle and niece at the same time. Constance said nothing; but her head drooped sorrowfully.

"That is impossible, M. Ginguet," said Pélagie after a moment; "some one has deceived you, is making game of you."

"No, mademoiselle, no one is making game of me; it is only too true; when I was told such a thing as that, don't you suppose I should make sure that it was true? I went to inquire about it at the house where M. Edmond is living now (he lives with his father and mother-in-law), and in fact, he has been married to Mademoiselle Bringuesingue for the past month."

"Why, such conduct is infamous," said Pélagie. "My poor Constance! to forsake you like that! and still you say nothing — you do not curse him. Oh, you are too good — a hundred times too good. Oh, these men! — who would love them? But I will never leave you, never forsake you, dear, I will try to console you and I shall never marry, so as not to be separated from you, for everything must give way to you!"

So saying, Pélagie kissed Constance, and wept, and hugged her, and the latter, who had kept

back her tears for a long time, supported her head on her friend's shoulder and felt a little solaced as she gave free vent to her sorrow; for although she had quite expected this event, for which she herself had prepared the way, Constance had not sufficient courage to learn without emotion that her sacrifice was consummated, that her cousin was entirely lost to her.

M. Pause said nothing, but he was deeply moved, and no longer felt the suffering he experienced from his gout. M. Ginguet wept, and as he wiped his eyes, muttered between his teeth,—

"Because one man conducts himself ill that is no reason for detesting them all—in a lump; and then to vow she will never marry! as if that would give me any hope."

It was again Constance who was obliged to console everybody; she had quelled her grief and she appeared resigned as she said,—

"But why are you all bemoaning me thus? I assure you I had long anticipated this event. I never had any desire but that my cousin should be happy, and I hope he will be so with the person he has married. With me he would perhaps have experienced regrets, weariness. I had nothing to offer him but poverty; should I think it a crime that he preferred fortune? Oh, no, I swear to you I would not have had him do otherwise; I am not unhappy, I have never been ambitious, and I have true friends. But I ask you a favor—let there be

no more question of my cousin; probably, we shall not see him again. Well, I will try to forget him, and the past shall be as nothing to me."

They promised Constance to obey her; they all admired the courage and resignation of the young girl; but they did not share her partiality for Edmond, whose conduct appeared to them inexcusable. Honest M. Pause blamed him, M. Ginguet despised him, and Pélagie reviled him.

However, Edmond was married and living in the bosom of the Bringuesingue family. In the first days, when he was as yet stunned by all that had happened to him and the new ties he had assumed, he had paid little attention to what was going on around him; but, his emotion being calmed, Edmond began to reflect and to criticise the persons with whom he lived.

The examination naturally began with his wife; Clodora was good-looking enough as to her face, but she had one of those expressionless physiognomies, or, we will say rather, she had a face and not a physiognomy; of her brilliant education nothing remained in her head, and her conversation was very limited. In the first days of their union, Edmond had attributed the paucity of her replies to timidity; but after six weeks of marriage she might have dared to talk a little to her husband.

One day Edmond, being alone with his wife, wished to consult her as to what use he should make of their fortune.

"My dear wife," said he, "your father has placed your dowry, which consists of some two hundred and fifty thousand francs, at my disposal; do you think we ought to content ourselves with spending the interest? or are you of the opinion that I should try and increase our fortune?"

Clodora opened her eyes wide, looked at her husband in astonishment, then, fixing her gaze on the tips of her boots, she answered,—

"Ah — mercy — I don't know."

"But I really ask your opinion; as it is your property that is in question, I don't wish to do anything without consulting you. Are you ambitious?"

"Ambitious? I don't know — no one has ever spoken of it to me."

"Are you satisfied with what we have? Have you formed any other desires? Would you like your husband to become a stockbroker? a banker? a notary?"

"Oh, it is all the same to me."

Edmond tapped his foot impatiently and bit his lips with vexation. The young woman was alarmed and recoiled from him, saying,—

"What is the matter with you? what makes you scowl like that?"

"There is nothing the matter with me, madame, absolutely nothing."

And the young man went off, heaving a deep sigh.

"My wife is most decidedly stupid," he said to himself.

Madame Bringuesingue had been delighted to see Edmond marry her daughter, because M. Guerval played contra-dances very well indeed on the piano; you are aware that dancing was a passion with Clodora's mother.

When he should be her son-in-law, living in the house with his wife's parents, Madame Bringuesingue flattered herself that Edmond would play contra-dances for her all day long and that she could begin to dance immediately after breakfast. In fact Edmond could scarcely come into the drawing-room in the morning but Madame Bringuesingue would say to him, "My dear son-in-law, play a little contra-dance for my daughter and I, we'll dance vis-à-vis."

Edmond dared not refuse, and Madame Bringuesingue would set herself to advancing and retiring with Clodora. Edmond, who thought it singular to see his wife and his mother-in-law dancing thus in the morning, would not play for long at a time. But when it happened that visitors came and they could dance a set of four, Madame Bringuesingue would run to Edmond again and exclaim,—

"Son-in-law, play a quadrille, there are four of us. My daughter and I have some squires; any tune that you like will do very well."

There was no way to refuse; the mother-in-law was tenacious, she would lead Edmond by the hand,

she would make him sit down; and the latter was obliged to play a contra-dance, which he often did ill-humoredly.

"Was it to have an orchestra continually at her orders," he would say to himself, "that Madame Bringuesingue gave me her daughter? But if she thinks that I shall pass my time in playing for her to dance, she will find she is very much mistaken."

As to M. Bringuesingue, he could not pass a single day away from his son-in-law; if he went into society, to a dinner, a ball, he took Edmond with him; when he entertained, held a reception, he always found it necessary that Edmond should be beside him; that gave confidence and self-assurance to the retired mustard-maker, who was not afraid, then, to put in his word or venture an opinion in conversation, being fully assured that with his son-in-law's aid he should always be able to say very good things and have excellent ideas.

But very soon it became dreadfully tiresome to Edmond to have to accompany his father-in-law everywhere. Since he had been married to Mademoiselle Bringuesingue, he had not enjoyed a moment's liberty. At home his wife and his mother-in-law were incessantly demanding that he should play dance music for them, and if he wanted to go out his father-in-law never failed to accompany him.

"What a hole I have got myself into," mused Edmond. "Surely, it was my evil genius which

brought me into contact with the Bringuesingue family. Oh, my cousin! If I had married you how happy I should have been; for you were pretty, you were gentle, and you possessed some mind, three things that are rarely found together. But you had ceased to love me! another had your heart. In truth, if I had been your husband you would never have known him who stole your love from me."

A year elapsed. At M. Pause's, life went on quietly and uniformly; work, conversation, reading filled all their time. Constance was sad, but resigned, and a smile sometimes played about her pale lips. They never spoke of Edmond, at least, not before her; and the young girl tried to appear as though she had forgotten him.

M. Pause was wholly occupied with his 'cello, and M. Ginguet with Pélagie; the latter continued to play a thousand tricks on the young clerk, who had now been advanced to twelve hundred francs.

In the Bringuesingue family they were far from enjoying a similar tranquillity; Clodora complained that her husband was ill-tempered with her; the mother-in-law complained that he often refused to play for her to dance; and the father-in-law also complained because lately Edmond had allowed him to say or do things for which he had been laughed at, without turning them into marks of wit.

Edmond had never been in love with his wife,

and he had taken an aversion to Monsieur and Madame Bringuesingue. To distract him from the dreariness of his home life the idea came to him to make speculations, not at the Bourse, but in a small way, buying property that seemed cheap, in the hope of turning a little money by the sale of it.

Unfortunately, Edmond understood no more of business than he did of the fluctuations of stock. He paid ready money for what he bought, and sold it on time or on notes; he was delighted when he sold at a profit; but often the assets he received were never liquidated, and this apprentice speculator was done out of his money and his expenses. Then he would go home in a very bad humor and receive his mother-in-law very ill when she came to beg him to play a contra-dance, as he did his father-in-law when he wished to take him out to spend the evening.

Instead of giving up these enterprises in which he was so unsuccessful, Edmond persevered in them in the self-opinionated way too many men have in regard to matters of which they know and understand nothing. His self-respect was involved; later on he wanted to recover the money he had lost, and he risked larger sums; he gave an ear to all the propositions which schemers made to him; and in trying to recoup himself he managed to dissipate his wife's dowry; like those gamblers who, having once begun to lose, never leave a game until their pockets are quite empty.

One day in the course of his peregrinations, which he prolonged as much as was possible, so as not to be with his wife's family, Edmond met M. Ginguet, who was just leaving his office. The latter turned away, so as not to speak to Constance's cousin, whose conduct had seemed to the young clerk lacking in delicacy; but Edmond ran after him and caught Ginguet. He took him by the arm, saying,—

"Why, it's a long time since I saw you. How many things have happened since then. It pleases and pains me at the same time to find myself again with you. But you looked as if you were running away from me, why was that?"

"By Jove, monsieur!" said Ginguet, hesitatingly, "it is because, since you have married, and abandoned your poor cousin who loved you so dearly, I do not care to be counted among your friends."

"My cousin! Ah, M. Ginguet, you are like everybody else, you judge by appearances. Did I not tell you that I would not accept any alliance that was offered me; that I looked upon myself as engaged to Constance?"

"Exactly so, you told me that and you have acted quite contrary to what you said."

"And what if my cousin was the first to break our promises? What if she said to me, 'You are free because for a long time past I have ceased to love you'? Well, monsieur, that was just what

she did say. But I should not have believed it, even then, had not other circumstances proved that she was unfaithful to me; I surprised her one evening at a rendezvous."

"Mademoiselle Constance?"

"Yes, monsieur, yes, Constance, and, confused by my presence, she judged it fruitless to pretend further. That is the truth, monsieur; finding my cousin had ceased to love me I married for spite, in anger — and I feel now that such marriages never bring happiness. So you see, M. Ginguet, it was not I who failed in keeping my engagement. Good-by. You are more fortunate than I, for no doubt you still see my cousin, and despite the wrong she has done me I feel that it would give me great pleasure to see her again. I could talk to her, at least, and she would not always answer, 'I don't know!' or 'It is all the same to me'; but there, I mustn't think of her any longer; we are separated forever."

Edmond's eyes almost filled with tears as he pronounced these words; wishing to hide his emotion, he squeezed Ginguet's hand and departed. The young clerk remained there quite stupefied by what he had heard; and as his face always expressed all that he felt, when he went that evening, as usual, to M. Pause's, Pélagie easily saw that something new had happened. The young man kept silent before Constance; he made signs to the young girl with his eyes, she could not understand what he meant

but it increased her curiosity. Constance noticed some of these signs, Ginguet's uneasiness had struck her also. Guessing that he could not explain himself before her, she made a pretext of needing an embroidery design which was in her bedroom and left Ginguet with Pélagie; immediately the latter demanded of him what he had learned that was new and why Constance should not hear it.

"What have I learned?" said Ginguet rolling up his eyes to the ceiling. "Ah, mademoiselle, such things! I haven't got over it yet, by Jove! Who would have suspected it? a young person so well brought up!"

"Please, please! explain yourself more clearly."

After gazing upward again and striking his hands one in the other, M. Ginguet decided to tell Pélagie of his meeting Edmond and all that the latter had said to him concerning Constance.

As the young man proceeded, Pélagie became more greatly agitated; he saw that she could hardly contain herself. She listened attentively, however, for she did not wish to lose a single word; but her reddened cheeks, the fire in her eyes, her labored breathing expressed all the indignation she felt.

"How dreadful!" said Pélagie when M. Ginguet had done speaking, "what a shameful calumny. It was not enough, then, that he should lightly abandon her who had sacrificed all for him, but he must defame her, dishonor her in the eyes of the world, my Constance, my good, my sweet

Constance, the model of all the virtues, whose heart never knew any but noble and generous sentiments, it is Constance that he dares to accuse. And you, monsieur, you could stand in cold blood to hear such atrocious calumnies, you did not defend my darling? did not make him retract all that he told you?"

Ginguet was all of a tremble, for never had he seen Pélagie so angry before.

"Mademoiselle — I could not," he stammered. "I did not know."

"You could not defend Constance, my dearest friend? You are a man, and you allow a woman to be traduced? Listen, M. Ginguet, I have but one thing to say to you, you assert that you love me, that you wish to marry me?"

"Ah, mademoiselle, that would be the height of felicity for me."

"Well, then, go and find Constance's cousin, make him confess that what he told you about his cousin were lying calumnies; make him contradict them in writing and bring the paper to me; or force him to fight with you and kill him to punish him for his unworthy lies. You hear me, monsieur! bring back Edmond's retraction; or, failing that, come when you have vanquished him and I will give you my hand."

"What, mademoiselle, you want —"

"That you should challenge and fight Edmond? Yes, monsieur. If you do not do what I ask of

you it is useless for you to think of paying further court to me — I will never be your wife. Well, monsieur, do you hesitate?"

"No, mademoiselle; no, I do not hesitate. I will fight, most certainly, although I do not know how to fight a duel. But what if I am killed, mademoiselle?"

"Then Edmond would be still more despicable, but you who will have died in upholding a noble cause, you who will have sacrificed yourself for my friend — you will have all my regrets, you will dwell in my memory, and every day I will go to your grave and weep and put flowers on it."

"Ah, I understand; you will be very fond of me — when I am dead! Come, that is still a consolation. It is decided, mademoiselle; tomorrow I will fight with M. Edmond."

"But be careful, not a word of all this before Constance."

"I will not open my mouth about it again, mademoiselle."

At this moment Constance returned. Suspecting that the matter concerned Edmond, she had been unable to resist her curiosity, and she had listened to and heard all the conversation between Pélagie and M. Ginguet. However, she looked as if she knew nothing and all the rest of the evening she pretended to feel very tranquil. Pélagie, on the contrary, gave way from time to time to exclamations of anger and impatience, and M. Ginguet

heaved great sighs, which indicated that he was not highly pleased with what he was going to do upon the following day.

As they parted, Constance shook hands with the young clerk in friendly fashion; the latter said good-by, as though he were afraid of never seeing them again, although Pélagie did her best, by glances, to keep up his courage.

The next day, early in the morning, Ginguet got ready to seek for Edmond at his home; he talked to himself as he did so and exhorted himself to be brave; when he felt himself weakening, he thought of Pélagie and then his love gave him courage, one feeling is nearly always the auxiliary of the other.

At the moment when he was leaving his rooms, holding in his hand a case of pistols which he had borrowed from a neighbor, Ginguet was stopped by his porter, who gave him a letter. The young man opened it and read,—

I overheard your conversation with Pélagie yesterday; you must not fight a duel for me, M. Ginguet; Edmond has not calumniated me, he has told you nothing but the truth. Good-by; tell Pélagie and her uncle that I shall always love them, but I must leave them; for when they know all, they will not think me worthy to live with them.

CONSTANCE.

Ginguet, as he finished this letter, let his box of pistols fall to the ground; he read it again, to assure himself that he was not mistaken, then he hurried to carry back to his neighbor the weapons

he had borrowed, and ran to Pélagie, who was with her uncle; first of all, he asked them where Constance was.

"She went out very early this morning," said M. Pause, "no doubt to carry back her work to the lingerie shop; but she has not returned yet."

Then Ginguet gave Pélagie the letter he had received. The latter wept disconsolately and told her uncle all that had passed the evening before. M. Pause blamed his niece's conduct in wishing to force Ginguet to fight, but he could not yet believe that Constance was guilty.

"No, no; she is not!" cried Pélagie, "and the letter in which she accuses herself only proves to me that she feared a combat would take place, and that her cousin might fall; for she loves him still, she has never ceased to desire his happiness, I am quite sure of it. But where has she gone? M. Ginguet, you positively must find Constance; I warn you that you will not be my husband until you have restored my unfortunate friend to me."

"But, mademoiselle, am I to blame that Constance has left you?"

"That has nothing to do with it, monsieur. I can only be happy when she is near me, and as I wish to be happy, in order to marry, the matter is quite settled."

Poor Ginguet went out, saying,—

"I shall have a good deal of trouble before I become Mademoiselle Pélagie's husband."

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However, during the day he begun his search. Every moment of time that his office duties left free to him he employed in running about the various neighborhoods to try and discover Constance, but he learned nothing, and as he returned to Pélagie, unable to give her any news of her darling, the young girl made a very wry face at him.

While this was going on, other events were taking place in the Bringuesingue family.

The father-in-law continually wanted his son-in-law to accompany him into society; but one day Edmond had been the first to make fun of some breach of manners by M. Bringuesingue. The latter had committed several solecisms which would have passed unobserved had not his son-in-law called attention to them. A violent quarrel had followed.

"I gave my daughter to you that you might supply me with wit," said M. Bringuesingue. "I sent Comtois away because of you, and he was at least willing to rub his nose when I committed any blunder; but you take upon yourself to laugh when I get involved in a phrase; things cannot go on like this."

"You are never willing to sit down to the piano when I wish to dance," said Madame Bringuesingue, "or else you play so fast that it is impossible to go in time and one is tired at once. That's not the way to behave with your mother-in-law."

"You never want to take me out walking," said

Clodora in her turn, "and you know I am very fond of walking."

To all this Edmond had answered,—

"My dear father-in-law, when you offered your daughter to me in marriage you should have informed me that I was to be your mentor also. But it is too late to repair your education; believe me and do not seek to imitate great noblemen, you will only succeed in making people laugh at you. My dear mother-in-law, I do not blame you for liking to dance, but I cannot pass my life in serving as your orchestra. As to you, madame, if I don't take you walking more often it is because you are continually yawning when I speak to you; from which I conclude that neither my company nor my conversation is pleasing to you."

Edmond's answer did not calm their minds; and it grew worse when they were assailed on all sides by men to whom Edmond owed money. When they learned that he had dissipated nearly all his wife's dowry, Clodora wept, her mother fainted, and M. Bringuesingue wanted to put his son-in-law in prison until he had restored the sum which he had so lightly spent; but as the father-in-law could not do this, he contented himself with ordering Edmond out of the house and telling him never to come back to it so long as he was poor, and to no longer consider Clodora as his wife.

Edmond had the right to take his wife away

with him, but he was not tempted to insist on it; he left Clodora with her parents, and departed from the Bringuesingue family, having but one regret — that he was no longer a bachelor.

Edmond established himself in a little attic room, and there set to work making pictures which were of hardly more artistic value than chimney boards, but he found a sale for them and lived by means of them; for, disgusted with pleasure, caring no longer for society, and having no friends, Edmond hardly left his room, and passed all his time in working. He was astonished at the pleasure he felt in this new kind of life; he was quite surprised that he should be happy while so assiduously busy.

"If I had not formerly refused M. Pause's offers," he said, "I feel that I might have still been happy beside Constance; with work and order and economy we need not have known poverty. My self-conceit has been my undoing! I refused the happiness that was near me and passed my life in doing foolish things, because I always thought I knew better than other people. I have consumed the property my mother left me, I have ruined my cousin, I have dissipated my wife's fortune, because I believed myself a poet, a musician, a speculator, and with no vocation for any of those things, inspired only by the same idea which, when I was young, made me say to my comrades at school: 'Oh, if I like, I can do so-and-so as well as you.'"

These reflections were rather tardy, but it is always a merit to recognize one's faults. There are so many people whom experience does not teach.

Edmond had been painting his little pictures for nearly a year when he received a letter from M. Bringuesingue announcing that his daughter Clodora had died from eating too much nougat; but that before she died she had thought of her husband, and had exacted a promise from her parents that they would make Edmond their heir. Monsieur and Madame Bringuesingue had sworn to their daughter that they would gratify her desires on condition that their son-in-law should ask nothing of them as long as they lived.

Edmond answered M. Bringuesingue that he was touched by the last remembrance of his wife, and begged him to dispose of his fortune as he pleased. Edmond was really becoming an artist; he no longer counted on riches as happiness; he had acquired a taste for work, what he did was better, and he got more pay. After a time he did really well, and there was a demand for his pictures; then he left his attic room and took a small apartment in which he had a studio.

Edmond had only lived in his new lodging —where he kept very much to himself—for three months when one evening an old woman came and knocked at his door. She was a neighbor who lived on the floor above Edmond, but the

latter was totally unacquainted with the persons who lived in the same house as himself.

The good woman was in tears; she said to the young man,—

"Please, monsieur, be kind enough to come and help me care for a young woman who is very ill, —she lives above here on the same landing as myself. She lives alone, seldom goes out, works all day; she sees nobody but me, and she has obliged me in a thousand ways; but the day before yesterday she fell ill, and to-day she is in a terrible fever—delirious. I don't know what to give her, and I don't like to leave her alone while I go for the doctor."

Edmond immediately followed the old neighbor; she led him to the invalid's room, where everything was very simple and modest, but neat and well-arranged. The young man, without understanding the reason, felt greatly moved as he approached the young woman's bed; but was completely overwhelmed when he saw that the sick woman he had come to aid was his cousin.

"Constance!" cried Edmond.

"You know this young lady," said the neighbor.

"Know her? she is my cousin; used to be my companion, and was for a long time my best friend. Constance! poor Constance! but she doesn't hear me or recognize me. Madame, go and get a doctor quickly. I shall establish myself here, for I shan't leave my cousin till she is out of danger."

He knelt beside Constance's bed.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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The old woman left; he remained alone beside Constance, who was violently delirious, and who often pronounced Edmond's name. The latter listened attentively to the invalid's ravings and presently he distinguished these words,—

"He thought me guilty — Great God! he thought I loved another than he. Why it was that he might be free. That letter — that note. It was I who dictated it. I have a copy of it there in the memorandum book he gave me. It is all that I received from him, and I wrote it there; I did it so he would be happy."

So saying the invalid pointed with her finger to a little box that was on the commode. Edmond, who for the first time had the thought that his cousin had said she was guilty that she might restore his liberty, felt the tears moisten his eyes at the idea of such devotion; he ran to the box, opened it, found there a memorandum book he had formerly given his cousin, and in one of the pockets the draft of a letter in his cousin's handwriting. He read it. It was the original of the letter he had received in which the writer offered to prove to him that Constance did not love him.

Edmond understood all his cousin's generosity, and that she, after giving him her fortune, had sacrificed to him also that which is the first with a woman — her honor and her reputation. He knelt beside Constance's bed; he took her hand and bathed it with tears, asking her to pardon him

for having thought her guilty, and cursing himself for having brought misfortune upon a woman who had so well deserved all his love. But Constance did not hear; her delirium was unabated, and her state increased Edmond's regrets and despair.

The old neighbor brought a doctor, who declared that he could not answer for the invalid's recovery and departed after writing his prescriptions.

Constance passed a cruel night; Edmond did not close an eye, but the neighbor could not resist her weariness, she slept soundly.

But a remembrance struck him, and, as soon as it was daylight and the neighbor had awakened, Edmond went out and ran without stopping to M. Pause's; there he told all that had happened, all that he knew of his cousin's beautiful devotion, and he had not finished his story when Pélagie, who had listened attentively, hastened to put on her bonnet and shawl, and said to him,—

"Take me to her. Ah, I knew her better than you and I did not for a moment believe her guilty."

Nine days later Constance, who was still delirious, struggling incessantly between life and death, experienced a salutary crisis. Deep slumber had supervened, and this had been followed by a light sleep, restful and restorative; and when Constance again opened her eyes she smiled as one who has already forgotten her sufferings. But imagine her surprise at seeing Pélagie, good M. Pause, her cousin, and even M. Ginguet grouped around her.

"Is it a dream?" said Constance shutting her eyes for fear of seeing an illusion melt away.

"No," Edmond answered pressing her hand softly; "the past alone is a dream, but you will forget it, cousin; you have already been so generous to me that I am sure you will continue so still. I know your devotion, and Heaven has rendered me free to entirely repair the wrong I have done. Once more, Constance, the past is but a dream, and it is your affianced husband who is beside you now, as on the day when our two mothers united our hands and our future."

Constance could not answer, she was shedding tears of happiness, and although the doctors forbid anything of an emotional nature for convalescents, in this case it hastened the invalid's cure.

Then Edmond married his cousin, then M. Ginguet looked at Pélagie, sighing, and said to her,—

"It is not my fault if some one else found your friend; I walked two or three leagues in Paris every day to look for her."

Pélagie's only answer was to place her hand in Ginguet's; and in truth the poor bachelor had well earned it. I do not affirm that Pélagie always followed her husband's wishes; but I can certify that M. Ginguet never had any will but that of his wife.

PETIT-TRICK THE BRETON

PETIT-TRICK was a true child of Brittany, that is to say, he was hot-headed, possessed a lively determination and a quick wit, and his speech was sometimes rather blunt; he was courageous and faithful withal, for that country has produced more men of noble qualities than I could cite here.

And, in speaking of fidelity, we do not intend here to speak of love and of those delightful vows that are made between two lovers, but rather of that admirable devotion which consists in a man's cleaving to his friends in misfortune, his masters in exile, his princes in adversity.

But every medal has its reverse side, as you very well know; besides, there is nothing perfect in nature. So there is nothing strange in the fact that Petit-Trick also had his weak side, since we all have ours; it is certain even that there are some people who have no good side.

The weak point in Trick was vanity; he had immense confidence in himself and was assured that no one could deceive him.

Poor fellow! what an error! what an insane delusion! Men of the greatest minds, geniuses even, have been abused and duped ere now.

It is the fate of poor humankind to be deceived; and some people go so far as to say that we should be very unhappy if we were not.

But as Petit-Trick was only fifteen years old, and was a Breton, we must therefore excuse the great confidence he possessed as to his own sagacity. We see in the world every day people whom age and experience have not rendered so rational; if youth were possessed of wisdom at the start how much of it would remain in old age?

Petit-Trick was desirous of going to Paris to try to make his fortune. This was a very natural wish, which almost invariably arises in the minds of those persons who have not been favored by fate; and a great many rich people conduct themselves in this respect precisely like their poorer fellows.

Jean-Jacques said, "It is essential to be happy, dear Emile; that is the first need of man."

But in our day they vary this phrase of Rousseau's, and they say, "It is essential to be rich." For they think that without money there is no means of being happy.

Let us return to Petit-Trick. His parents had been in business, but they had not amassed money; what is more, they had often been the dupes of schemers and rascals. The youth said to himself,—

"I shall be shrewder than they, or luckier; I shan't allow myself to be deceived by anybody, and I shall make my way rapidly in Paris."

An old uncle, the only relation who remained to Trick, consented to send him to the capital of France and managed to obtain a situation for him as shop boy in a kind of bric-a-brac shop.

They gave the young man his lodging and board, which was very frugal, and twenty sous a week, not inclusive of the profits; that is to say, the small sums he received for beer money from the customers to whom he carried goods. The situation was a modest one, but Petit-Trick thought it magnificent. He thanked his uncle, packed his effects in a carpet bag and climbed on to the roof of a coach where a seat had been kept for him.

Trick's lively, roguish, open countenance seemed to make a very agreeable impression on a traveller who was seated beside him. This traveller was not at all like the young Breton, his shifty face, his small, evil eyes did not indicate stupidity, but they did not inspire confidence; in fact, the smile on his thin lips was sarcastic and perfidious. Believe me, you should mistrust thin lips — but don't place great confidence in any others.

Petit-Trick, nevertheless, told all his business to his companion on the coach, and the latter answered this recital by giving what seemed to be very sincere advice.

"Young man," said he, "you are going to Paris, be on your guard. In great capitals there are always a good many thieves, and Paris does not lack them. In an immense city, where so many people

wake up without knowing how they are going to get food for the day, you can comprehend that many robberies, swindles, and pickpocketings are committed. The capitals most renowned for their beauty and the privileges and pleasures which they afford have the gloomy privilege also of attracting within their precincts the most skilful swindlers; wherever there is a crowd you may be sure there are thieves; it is a sad truth, but it is a truth.

"Be on your guard against all the tricks they may try to play on you. I am not speaking of robberies with weapons or by means of ladders or breaking in, those are among the category of vulgar crimes and are common all over the country, but there are robberies in Paris against which it is necessary to be furnished with prudence."

Petit-Trick listened smilingly to his companion, exclaiming from time to time,—

"Oh, monsieur, there is no danger. I shall not let myself be caught. I bet I should recognize a thief a mile away."

"Ah, so you think, my young friend; that is a confidence that may be fatal to you. But let us see, since you are so certain of being on your guard against thieves, do you know what a 'vol au bonjour'[1] is? an American confidence thief? Do you know what a 'vol au pot' is?"

Little Trick opened his eyes wide, then he shook his head, exclaiming,—

[1] A lodging-house thief.

"Bah, that's foolish talk, that is, the kind of thing they tell children to frighten them."

"I have no desire to frighten you, my young friend, I only wish to enlighten your inexperience. Listen to me; among the thieves that frequent Paris the first to be mentioned is the one called 'au bonjour.' I will explain to you what that means, for it may serve you on occasion. In the morning in Paris in a house where there are often a great number of tenants, the porter chats with a maid or a neighbor or he goes across the street to get his milk from the milkwoman, or he sweeps the back of his courtyard or feeds his magpie (in Paris porters nearly always keep a magpie or a paroquet, or a dog, or three cats); in short, they are so very busy in the mornings that they do not pay much attention to the people who come into the house.

"A 'worker' goes into the house and very lightly ascends the stairs, looking at all the doors, and it is rarely that he does not see one with the key left in it; for some bachelor who has been up late says to his porter, 'Here's my key, give it to-morrow to my charwoman; I don't want to get up to let her in to her work.' In the morning the charwoman goes up, but when she goes down to get the coffee and rolls and milk she invariably leaves the key in the lock, very often the maids do the same, or it is the porter who takes up the newspaper and forgets the key in the door, or more often still it is the

tenant himself who says, 'Leave my key on the outside, so that I may not have to disturb myself if any one comes to see me.'"

Petit-Trick shouted with laughter as he said,—

"Oh, I shan't be as stupid as all that, I shan't."

"You think so! At length the 'worker' sees a key; he opens the door very gently and goes into the room. A gentleman is lying on his bed, snoring in perfect security. Perhaps he is dreaming of a gold mine or that he has inherited a relative's millions, or he has become a sub-prefect or some one has sent him a box of jams from Bar.

"While he is enjoying such sweet dreams the 'worker' lightly picks up a watch and seizes some money that is in a desk and departs, taking every possible precaution not to awaken the sleeper, boldly leaves the house, and passes the porter's lodge humming one of Rossini's arias."

"Well, I shan't let myself be robbed like that," said Trick, "I'm sure I'm too wide awake for that; I sleep so lightly that I can hear the scampering of a mouse."

"Really? my dear fellow; I must congratulate you on the possession of such a faculty as that. But suppose after going in at a door the thief should come in contact with some one who is very wide awake, do you think he is taken?—not at all. 'Who's there?' asks the person who has heard his door open, or who sees some one unknown to him come in. The thief pretends to be surprised

and says, 'Pardon me, but I want M. Schicoff, dentist.' 'Don't know him. There isn't a dentist in the house.' 'Oh, a thousand pardons, monsieur; I must have mistaken the number. Sorry to have disturbed you.' And the robber disappears like lightning, while the tenant of the apartment racks his memory as to whether he has dentists for neighbors and says, 'Schicoff—that's a Russian name, it seems that Russia furnishes us with dentists also.'"

"Monsieur," said Trick after listening to his companion, "I should see at once by a person's face whether or no he was a thief; then I should jump on him and I should stop him. Oh, I'm not a coward, I ain't."

"Devil take it!" said the traveller fixing his little evil eyes on the youth, "do you suppose you could recognize a thief by merely looking at him?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Hang it, what a fine fellow you are! Come, I'm very pleased to know one who is so sharp as you are. All the same, I've never taught you what 'robbery au bonjour' is, and I should like to tell you what 'robbery à l'Americaine' is, for it's very prevalent in Paris now, the surprising thing being that they can find dupes there."

"Oh, it's not worth while troubling yourself, monsieur."

"Do you know what it is then?"

"No, monsieur."

"Then let me tell you. The thief walks quietly

about Paris like a simple idler; he watches a man carrying a bag of money, for which purpose he stations himself in the vicinity of the treasury or the bank; in these neighborhoods men carrying money are as common as the omnibuses. The thief sees one, he accosts him, pretending to be a foreigner and to be in need of changing some gold into silver. A confederate passes who pretends to want to seize the occasion to do some good business; for his part the man who carries the bag of money does not wish to let this piece of luck escape him. They go into a wine shop. The pretended foreigner, who speaks a jargon of several languages, counts out his gold against the silver; the confederate pretends to go out and look for some more crown pieces and does not come back. The foreigner asserts that he has carried off a piece of gold and rushes after him. The gentlemen do not come back. The man with the bag pays for what they have had and goes to a money-changer to sell his gold. Arrived there, he perceives that they have robbed him of his rolls of good coin, and that nothing remains in his bag but lead pipe or sous."

"Good heavens, monsieur, all these people allow themselves to be caught too easily; they have no business to be such simpletons."

"Do you wish me to tell you of other kinds of robbery that are rife in Paris?"

"It is needless, monsieur, you have told me quite enough. Besides, I have an idea that the

thieves would not have the slightest desire to brush against me."

"As you like, my dear young friend."

This exceedingly officious gentleman said no more; he turned away, and during the rest of the journey slept, or pretended to sleep. As to Trick, he slept perfectly well without a pillow, which it is mightily convenient to be able to do when one lacks that article.

They reached Paris. Trick's companion alighted before they reached the barrier, after again bidding Petit-Trick to remember his advice.

The young Breton had hardly reached the great city when he looked at the address of the dealer in novelties, and read,—

"M. Fripard, Rue aux Ours."

Trick got some one to point out the Rue aux Ours; then, with his carpet bag on his back, he hurried to M. Fripard's. The bric-a-brac dealer was a little, shabby, yellow old man, who had worn the same frock coat for sixteen years, a fact which demonstrates his economical turn of mind. He received the young Breton rather harshly.

"You are going to be my clerk," said he, "but take care! if you lose anything, if you allow anyone to steal anything from you, remember, I shall take it out of your pay."

"That is understood," answered Trick; and to himself he added, "That won't prevent my saving money."

"You will begin immediately to become acquainted with the business. You will keep my books; they tell me you write well?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"You must write very close so as to use less paper. Can you write with steel pens?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Very well, I will supply you with some. But you are not going to work in that good coat?"

"Oh, no, monsieur, I have a jacket and a blouse, too; I have everything that is necessary, I am well fitted out."

"Then get your blouse immediately. Don't take it off except on Sundays; and even on those days, if you take my advice, you'll content yourself with turning it."

Petit-Trick, saying to himself that his patron pushed his economy to extremes, set to work to open his bag, which on coming in he had placed in a corner of the shop.

Suddenly an exclamation of amazement escaped the young Breton; old Fripard was alarmed, and turning towards him, said anxiously,—

"Have you already broken something?"

"No, monsieur, it's not that; but see here, my carpet bag is empty, and I had in it eight shirts, twelve handkerchiefs, three waistcoats, two pairs of trousers, two jackets, and a blouse."

The old shopkeeper looked in the bag, which contained nothing but sawdust.

"Your uncle wished to give you a lesson in economy, I suppose," said M. Fripard, "he thinks what you stand up in enough for you.

"No, monsieur, no; I did my own packing, and I'm sure I had all I have told you. And now there is nothing but sawdust — ah, here is a paper with something written on it."

Trick opened the paper and read,—

I have told you to be on your guard against robbers, you didn't care to believe me, but the good advice I gave you is worth a great deal more than the contents of your bag.

"Why, the rascally thief!" cried Trick, "my companion during the journey has robbed me."

Old Fripard made a grimace, saying,—

"My good fellow, this does not prove you to be very sharp, and I should perhaps do better not to take you into my employ; for I fear you will allow me to be robbed also."

Trick promised the old man to be constantly on his guard and to place confidence in no one, and Fripard consented to keep him, saying,—

"Fortunately for you, your coat is nearly new, and you can wear it for ten years as it is without having it turned."

"Yes, but I hope to grow within the next ten years, and my coat will not grow," said Trick, sighing.

By great good fortune the young Breton had not put his money in his carpet bag; with what

little he had he bought some new linen, and he had soon forgotten this first misadventure.

Petit-Trick passed eight months at the old novelty dealer's, and as during all that time he had not allowed himself to be once caught napping his confidence in himself had returned, and with it the vanity and bragging which were his chief faults.

The young apprentice was still earning only four francs a month, which was very little; but his master obliged him to be economical and did not allow him the slightest distraction or pleasure.

One fine morning a very well-dressed gentleman went into the novelty dealer's shop, having seen in the window a handsome umbrella, almost new. This individual examined the umbrella and inquired the price of it.

"Thirty-six francs," answered M. Fripard, "and from that I will abate nothing. This umbrella is covered with magnificent taffeta, the wood is choice; the tortoiseshell knob is encrusted with gold. Thirty-six francs is a mere nothing for it."

"Let some one carry it for me; follow me, for I am going home."

As the gentleman had a cane it was natural that he should not wish to load himself with an umbrella also; besides, one may be a very honest man and not have thirty-six francs in his pockets to pay for a purchase made "ex abrupto."

Old Fripard gave the fine umbrella to Petit-Trick, but he whispered to him,—

"Above all, do not leave this object without having received its equivalent."

Trick nodded his head affirmatively; he put the umbrella under his arm and followed the gentleman, saying,—

"You may be quite easy, master; I'm not one to be caught; I let them give me sawdust once, it is true, but if I had held my bag during the whole journey that would not have happened."

The fine gentleman walked for some distance; at length he stopped at a house, of which the carriage gate was open, he fumbled in his pockets and exclaimed,—

"Devil take it! I've left my snuffbox in your shop. I must have done so. I remember very well now that I took a pinch of snuff; I must have left it on a counter. I set great store by that snuffbox, it has a little thing of Teniers' stuck on the top which comes to me from an aunt who stood to me in the place of a mother. Young man, give me that umbrella and kindly go back in search of my snuffbox."

Trick became red up to the ears, and he held the umbrella still more tightly under his arm; for he remembered the orders he had received from his employer.

The dandy resumed very graciously,—

"I have guessed the cause of your embarrassment, young man, you are afraid to leave the umbrella with me without being paid for it. I do not

wonder at your caution, Paris has so many thieves that people have to be upon their guard, especially when they are in business. Wait, my young friend, here are two twenty-franc pieces, that is rather more than I owe you, but remember my snuff box and the four francs which remain will be for yourself. This is where I live, you will ask for M. Breloque; go quickly and I shall be greatly obliged."

Petit-Trick gave him the umbrella at once. He took the two pieces the man gave him and set off running, delighted at earning in one day what he ordinarily earned in a month, and making up his mind to enjoy himself greatly on the following Sunday with his four francs.

He arrived at the shop in joyous mood and immediately began to rummage about the shop.

"Where is that gentleman's snuffbox? he left it here — he is sure of it. You must have found his snuffbox, there's a little picture by Teniers on it."

"I've found nothing," cried old Fripard; "but you idiot, what have you done with the umbrella? Have you in spite of my orders delivered an article worth thirty-six francs without being paid for it. Well, if you have I shall send you away."

"Don't you be afraid, master, I ain't such a simpleton as that, I ain't. Wait, here are forty francs in two gold pieces that monsieur gave me to pay you, and the change is to be for me if

I find the snuffbox; hang it, I should very much like to find it." And Trick set vigorously to work to look for it.

But the shopkeeper had taken the two pieces of gold which had been given him in payment, their weight seemed to him suspicious. He examined them closely, rubbed them with his finger, uttered an exclamation of anger and kicked his young clerk, who was still looking for the snuffbox under the counters.

"There, you little rascal!" cried old Fripard, "take that for your drink money; these are two twenty-sous pieces that have been gilded, and badly gilded at that. I have been robbed."

Trick was stunned for a moment, but soon left the shop running; he remembered in what street, at what house he had left the fine gentleman; he reached it, recognized the gateway, went in, and asked the porter for "M. Breloque." The porter answered,—

"There has never been a Breloque in this house."

Trick gave a description of the gentleman and the umbrella, but the porter did not seem to know what he was talking about.

The poor fellow returned weeping to Fripard, who said to him,—

"You have thirty-six francs to remit to me for the object sold; you have given me two, and thirty-four remain to be paid. You have already earned thirty-two francs here; you will pay me

those and go. I shall lose forty sous by that, but I would much rather do so than have you remain longer."

Trick gave up his savings, and left the bric-a-brac dealer's, asking himself what he was to do.

Petit-Trick remembered then, that in running his errands he had made acquaintance with a young man employed in a novelty shop, who had given him his address; he hurried off to find him, that he might confide his troubles to him.

The young novelty clerk presented Petit-Trick to his employer and informed the latter of the predicament in which the poor lad stood, and the merchant consented to take Trick as an extra clerk.

So here was the young Breton placed in a big novelty shop, where he was not likely to regret the bric-a-brac shop. He conducted himself so zealously, showed so much aptitude for work, that at the end of six weeks his employer allotted him a salary of twelve francs a month.

Twelve francs a month! it was three times as much as he had earned at old Fripard's; Trick never doubted but that he was on his way to fortune.

He had been in the novelty shop for six months, and there is no need to say that his confidence in himself was restored and that he often exclaimed,—

"I would not advise any one to try to take me in now."

However, Trick's duty was to do the errands

and carry home to the customers the goods they had chosen.

One day he left his shop holding under his arm two pretty French cashmere shawls, carefully wrapped and tied with twine.

A well-dressed individual, who for some time past had been following the young clerk, soon accosted him, he spoke a jargon of German and French, and it often happened that he spoke both languages at once. He bowed to Trick, saying,—

"My goot monsir, pardon, forgif me for speaking to von I do not know, but I am a foreigner, and I haf not any acquaintances here."

The young clerk began to laugh, and said,—

"Hang it, any one could understand that you are a foreigner, you speak French like a chimney-sweep."

"Yes, yes, like a shimney — Forgif me, leedle monsir, you haf a pretty face which inspires mooch gonfidence, and if you vill oblige me mit some information, I vill gif you fife francs for yourself."

As he finished these words, the foreigner drew from his pocket a handful of hundred-sous pieces and of napoleons, and the young clerk, who had now become accustomed to handling gold and silver, ascertained that the pieces were not false.

Dazzled by the sight of so many coins, and asking nothing better than to earn five francs if he could do so in a manner that was not reprehensible, Trick exclaimed,—

"What service do you ask of me, foreigner? speak; and if possible I am ready to oblige you."

"That is quite possible, leedle monsir. I, a foreigner, came to Paris to amuse myself, look you, and I am still bored, mein herr! I should like for you to show me the way to one of the little theatres where they play farces which will give one a good laugh. Do you oonterstandt?"

"Yes, I understand; it is easy enough; there are plenty of theatres in Paris where one can amuse one's self. For instance, the Cirque, Seraphin, Curtius, or even the Delassements-comiques — those gentlemen in the shop tell me that they give little vaudevilles even at l'Opéra."

"Very well, sapremann! I should like to go to that theatre; will you show me the way there?"

"With pleasure; come along."

Petit-Trick walked off and the foreigner followed him. Suddenly, the latter said to the young man,—

"See here! I have a big sum of money about me — in gold, which I should like to hide, so I do not take id to the theatre mit me — for fear of robbers; show me the way, if you please, to the canal banks, to a part where few people bass. Do you oonterstandt why?"

"That's easy enough," said Trick, "the canal is right behind the small theatres."

They reached the water's edge in a spot where, as yet, no houses had been built. The foreigner stopped before a heap of stones, saying,—

"I should like to hide my treasure here, help me, leedle monsir."

Trick yielded to the stranger's fancy; he helped to hide a good round sum under the stones, while no one was passing by the water. The treasure hidden, they set off walking again.

They drew near to the boulevards, and the little clerk was about to show his companion the theatre he wished to go to, when the latter stopped again, saying,—

"Allow me to be excused. Tevil take id! I am uneasy. I am afraidt some von vill steal my money."

"Hang it! I told you you were doing a foolish thing."

"I must really ged id again. Leedle monsir, you know where id vas hid, oblige me by going to get id, and bring it back to me, then I vill pay you the price agreed on mit us both."

"Just as you like," said Trick, preparing to run, but the stranger stopped him, saying,—

"One minud, you are going to ged my gold, bud berhaps you don'd come back. Pardon, bud I don'd know you, and they told me that in Paris they trick so many foreigners."

"That's true," said Trick laughing, "they took me in even."

"Leedle monsir, leave mit me the backet you haf oonder your arm as a security to me."

Trick reflected: the two shawls he was carrying

were worth eight hundred francs. The stranger had hidden about a million francs in gold, he gave him the packet, exclaiming,—

"That is right; keep that, and wait here for me. I shan't be long."

Petit-Trick set off running. He reached the canal banks and recognized the place where he had helped to hide the treasure; he pulled away the stones and rooted among them — there was nothing there. A confederate had already regained the money, and "leedle monsir," after removing all the neighboring stones, ran to the place where he had left the queer-speaking man and of course failed to find him.

The poor fellow went back weeping to his shop, where his shopmates told him he had been the victim of robbery "au pot" and his employer discharged him.

Petit-Trick returned then to his old uncle, saying to himself,—

"I have had enough of Paris! What an ugly town it is; what lots of mud, dirt, people, carriages, omnibuses, shops, ragamuffins, loafers, idlers and thieves. I shall go back to my old uncle, and my beautiful, good Brittany. There, at least, one knows with whom one is dealing; one is not always making blunders, and with a little wit one isn't obliged to be constantly on his guard, which is very tiring even for the cleverest people."

You see, young Trick, in spite of all that had

happened to him, was hardly cured as yet of the good opinion he held of himself; in his anger he laid it all to the big city, and blamed it for all the faults he had himself committed. But this is our usual custom; we mortals will never confess ourselves in the wrong, at least, unless we have a great deal of both mind and merit; in the latter case we frankly confess our errors, because we do not fear that that will make us pass for fools.

When Petit-Trick had returned to his beloved Brittany he did not relate to his old uncle how things had gone with him in Paris; he presented himself as a victim of events and circumstances. The old uncle believed, or pretended to believe him, which comes almost to the same thing. Then, eighteen months after his nephew's return, the old man died, naming Trick as his sole heir. But it came about that the old uncle, who had always lived very modestly, and who for that reason had been thought poorer than he was, left Petit-Trick a good round fortune, enough to enable him to live very comfortably, in good bank notes and in gold pieces which he had hidden in the bottom of a chest.

The pieces of gold, to tell the truth, bore divers effigies; there were louis with the portrait of the unfortunate Louis XVI, then there were twenty-franc pieces issued under the Republic, then napoleons, and pieces coined in the reigns of Charles X and Louis XVIII, etc., etc.

Of all these pieces of gold the ones which Petit-Trick seemed fondest of were the ones which bore the portrait of Louis XVI, whether because, as a Breton, he bore an attachment to that dynasty, or whether it was because that piece was worth twenty-four francs while the others were worth only twenty, we have never rightly known — there are so many things in this world that we never rightly know.

Here was Trick, then, at the age of eighteen years, free of all control, and the possessor of a very pretty fortune.

It was more necessary than ever that he should not allow himself to be trapped, and that he might not be so, what do you imagine Trick thought of doing? I will give you a hundred guesses, I will give you a thousand.

But as I see that you will never guess, I prefer to tell you outright — he thought of taking a wife; here was an idea for him to have. Certainly woman is the prettiest, most seductive, most provoking creature that one can meet on the face of the earth; I, at least, have never found anything more desirable, and I think men generally will be of my opinion; but it is precisely because woman possesses so many attractions, so many charms, that it is folly to think of marrying, putting one's self in chains, at eighteen; above all is this the case when one has never known love. Marriage demands experience — a great deal of experience — on the part of the husband, be it understood.

"And why on the part of the husband only?" the ladies perhaps will exclaim.

"Ah, mesdames, because if you also had experience, you probably would none of us."

Trick said to himself,—

"I am going to choose a little woman who will be able to render me happy. I know what is necessary, I cannot deceive myself there.

"I am cheerful, so I ought to take a wife who is jolly; I have wit, and I shan't make such a mistake as to marry a stupid woman; I am shrewd, and my wife must be full of mischief; I am fond of good eating, and I want a wife who has a good appetite; I love music, and I want a wife who can accompany my singing and has a correct ear; in fact, I am well-built and have a nice enough face and it is indispensable that my better-half should be pretty and well-made, so that our children will be little cupids."

You see Petit-Trick had a predeliction for homœopathy. There are people who think that in marriage contrasts are better than resemblances.

Certain it is, for instance, that if two stubborn people marry they will pass their days in disputing without ever wishing to yield. Two talkative people will have almost as much trouble in agreeing together. Two married people of choleric disposition will break everything around them; two greedy people will dispute over the same morsel.

But if vivacity is allied to indifference, wit to

stupidity, avarice to prodigality, cheerfulness to sadness, incompatibility of temper will be the inevitable result of such a union. It is a very troublesome question, so we will return to Trick who, like all people who have great confidence in themselves, was never at a loss.

At eighteen years of age, M. Trick flattered himself that he knew women. What fatuity! there are many men who have lived and died without being able to comprehend them. Philosophers, sages, savants, men of wit, and men who were successful with the fair sex, have said or written a great many things about women; and the greater part of their opinions differ so widely the one from the other that, after consulting, reading, and pondering them, one is as far off as ever.

But young Trick had more confidence in himself than in all the rest of the world put together; and although he had consulted neither Cato, nor Origen, nor Tertullian, nor Saint Bernard, nor Catullus, nor Juvenal, nor Virgil, nor Confucius, nor Tibullus, nor Voltaire, nor La Fontaine, nor Boileau — he was certain of making a good choice.

But, in the neighborhood where he lived, Trick had cast his eyes upon a young person who might be about his own age. She was a provoking little brunette with velvety black eyes, long lashes, and well-defined, well-arched eyebrows; her whole person breathed cheerfulness, pleasure, mischief and coquetry; her slender waist was rounded and

supple and denoted that she was graceful in all her movements. Lively in humor, jolly and full of fun, Mademoiselle Pélagie, this was the name of the young girl, was most attractive and winning at the first glance; without doubt, though, one should not marry a woman for no better reason than the impression she produces at first sight.

People say that when they are reasonable, but this dangerous first glance usually does its work, and one cannot easily efface the impression made by it.

Mademoiselle Pélagie lived with an old paralytic aunt. Is there a feebler restraint for a young girl than an old aunt who cannot stir from her armchair? Mademoiselle Pélagie quite often left her aunt to the servant's care and went by herself about the country, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback; the young person sat her horse like a pupil of Boucher or Franconi; she often shot small birds and she smoked cigarettes.

Trick had noticed all this and he was delighted. After following Mademoiselle Pélagie, with both eyes and feet, for a long time, Trick accosted her one day at the edge of a little wood, where she had dismounted to allow her horse to get his breath.

The youth approached the seductive Amazon.

"Excuse my temerity," said he, "but I have long desired to make your acquaintance. I am called Trick, and I live on an estate in your neighborhood."

Mademoiselle Pélagie knew Petit-Trick well; she had noticed that for a long time past he had followed her everywhere, that he incessantly dogged her steps; and she guessed the reason exactly.

Where is the woman, the lady, the widow, the young girl, who is not aware when she has made a conquest? unless, indeed, in the case of one of those timid lovers who only follow their charmers afar off, who only look furtively at them, and dare not touch them with the tip of a finger. But this kind of lover is becoming rare, there is even reason for thinking that the species is altogether lost.

Mademoiselle Pélagie smiled encouragingly on young Trick, and answered,—

"You are not unknown to me, monsieur; I knew that you were my neighbor, and I have seen you several times in my walks."

"Mademoiselle, what I have to say to you may seem somewhat premature and very bold; but when one's happiness is in question, I have always thought one should act quickly."

"That is my opinion also, monsieur; so speak, and do not be afraid to explain yourself."

"Mademoiselle, since I inherited my uncle's property one thing only has been lacking to make me completely happy."

"What is this thing — monsieur?"

"A wife, mademoiselle."

"You are perfectly right, monsieur — a man without a wife is like a body without a mind."

Young Trick might have thought this remark rather unflattering, especially from the mouth of a young lady; but, far from that, he was delighted at this answer, and exclaimed,—

"You speak like an angel, mademoiselle. Yes, I am the body — looking for a soul. Will you be mine, ravishing Pélagie? or, to speak plainly, will you be my wife? I lay my name, my person, and my fortune, at your feet."

Pélagie looked at the young man with an expression that might have been interpreted to mean several things; at last she answered,—

"You are in love with me, then?"

"Madly in love."

"And how long is it since you began to love me?"

"Six weeks."

"And you haven't told me till today — you must have thought about it a good deal!"

"It was because I didn't dare."

"Ha, ha, ha! a timid man seems to me like a lame horse, if you leave him to himself he's sure to throw you to the ground."

Trick was delighted with this reflection also.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "I am not lame, trust yourself to me, and you will never lack support. Can you grant me what I ask? Will you allow me to hope?"

"You may hope, to be sure, that never does any harm. As to accepting you for a husband — pos-

sibly I may. However, I must learn your disposition first, that I may know if you will suit me. Can you ride a horse?"

"A little, mademoiselle."

"You will mount behind me, we shall see if you know how to keep on."

And without waiting for Trick to answer, Mademoiselle Pélagie jumped lightly on her courser. The young man took much longer to mount; at last he was seated on the crupper of the saddle.

"Hold tight to me," said Pélagie, "for I warn you I like to go fast."

"Oh, mademoiselle," answered Trick, clasping the Amazon's tiny waist, "go at a gallop, go as fast as you like, as fast as he can lay legs to the ground even; I shall be only too happy to ride on horseback with you."

Pélagie struck her horse with her riding crop, and he darted off at lightning speed. Trick held the horsewoman tight round the waist, but he bounded on the crupper in such a way as to cause him to make some very singular grimaces. Presently Mademoiselle Pélagie's courser, unaccustomed to carry two persons, began to gambol and prance; and Trick, to whom this new kind of exercise was unexpected, let go of his partner and rolled in the dust.

"You haven't a very sure seat," said Pélagie laughing, "but I will give you some lessons. Have you a horse?"

"No, mademoiselle."

"You must buy a handsome, lively, well-trained one for me, and I will give you this one, which never gambols when he carries only one person."

The next day, Trick offered the handsome Amazon a very pretty horse. Two days later mademoiselle made Trick give her a beautiful pearl collarette, and some days later some diamond earrings.

The young girl was full of fancies, and she exclaimed,—

"To please me, you will first of all have to satisfy my caprices; I shall never believe in the love of a man who fails to gratify all my desires."

"She must be certain that I love her," said Trick to himself, "for I always hasten to give her everything for which she expresses the slightest wish; but I am quite certain that she is grateful, and that in return she is madly in love with me." Later on, Trick said to Pélagie,—

"When shall we be married?"

"By and by, but I want to study your disposition a little more," answered the damsel.

The only thing that displeased Trick was that Mademoiselle Pélagie received a good many young men at her house.

"If they are lovers," said Trick to the young girl, "why don't you dismiss them? for since you like me you can't like them also."

This reasoning was entirely illogical, for we

always like a good many people at the same time; but Pélagie laughingly answered,—

"These young men come to see my aunt; she loves company, and, as it gives her pleasure to have people come to the house, I am too good a niece to deprive her of it."

But one fine morning Trick took it into his head to get up sooner than usual, to see the sun rise; and as he passed through a dense bit of wood, he came upon Mademoiselle Pélagie beneath a tree with a handsome young fellow, also watching the sun rise.

Trick became white, yellow, red and blue with anger at having been thus duped. As to the young Amazon, she only laughed, and said,—

"Oh, so you watch people, do you? decidedly I shan't marry you, you are too suspicious, and then you don't know how to keep your seat on horseback."

"I am out of pocket so far as my presents are concerned," said Trick to himself, as he turned towards home again. "But it was very fortunate that I found her out before marriage instead of after. Come, I was mistaken in her. I thought that young girl was rather free in her actions, but I am beginning to see that she is too much so. It is owing to her aunt, who is paralytic. I shan't pay my addresses again to a damsel whose parents are helpless. How fortunate it was that I got up early this morning. I shall look for another wife, but

this time I shall not allow myself to be taken in, I shall be more careful. Mademoiselle was much too flighty, and her manners smacked of the stable, they were very masculine. A timid, modest woman is much better. Oh, I shall find what I want, only I must be quick about it."

Young Trick was in a hurry to assume marital chains; he recognized the happiness of marriage, he thought as Voltaire has written,—

> . . . Women were made by heaven,
> Turbid souls of men to leaven;
> To make them better and to give relief,
> To calm their humors and dispel their grief.

However, Mademoiselle Pélagie had taken singular measures to correct Petit-Trick's early rising. But at eighteen years of age one soon forgets a misadventure.

A short time after this the young man learned that in a pretty bourgeoise house, inhabited by an old couple of independent means, there was a young lady of marriageable age, and that this damsel, whom people cited for her youth and beauty, passed also for a model of virtue.

Trick went boldly one day to the Romorantin couple, presented himself as a neighbor desiring to make acquaintance, and for the first time saw Mademoiselle Seraphinette.

Picture to yourself a blonde with blue eyes, a small, thin-lipped mouth; a modest forehead on

which her beautiful hair fell in thick curls, while others fell on her neck and shoulders, which were dazzlingly white; picture to yourself a young person who was short and thin, quite tiny, in fact, with small, arched feet and modest, girlish carriage; who lowered her eyes when any one looked at her, who blushed when any one spoke to her, who was embarrassed when she had to answer,—and you will have an idea of mademoiselle as she was.

When he saw the old gentleman's daughter, Trick immediately felt smitten, charmed, seduced, inflamed.

You think, perhaps, that Trick was very susceptible, but I can only tell you that he was at that time but eighteen and a half years old; and that at that age a man is usually as quickly inflamed as a package of matches; that besides, a man should always be inflamed at the sight of beauty; that God has created him so. Ask the ladies what a man is who is no longer influenced by beauty, and they will tell you that he is a very undesirable person in any society.

"This is the woman for me, so innocent, so modest, so gentle, so well-behaved—with her eyes almost always downcast! What a difference between her and that perfidious Pélagie, whose eyes had a trick of staring as though they would pierce through my waistcoat even, and who walked almost like a man. I will marry this young girl. I like to think that she may perhaps find me agree-

able; she has not yet looked me in the face — but I think she did glance at my profile. Then she has such an obedient, submissive deportment towards her parents, that when the latter say to her, 'You are to become Madame Trick,' I wager she will answer, 'With pleasure, papa; when ever you like, mamma.'"

Trick hastened to prefer his suit to her parents.

M. Romorantin was a tall, thin old man, yellow, dry, who looked a good deal like a crow; his wife was a little woman, rather humpbacked and very bandy-legged, and might have taken the part of the fairy Carabosse.

Seraphinette's parents questioned Trick very closely as to his position, his fortune, then they permitted him to hope, saying,—

"In the mean time we will visit you at your house, in order that we may assure ourselves as to your position."

Trick welcomed this proposition with joy. He invited the family Romorantin to look upon his house as their own, and to come and dine with him as often as possible.

It is necessary to say that this old gentleman who looked so much like a crow had a decided liking for the table, and that Madame Carabosse, his wife, was, despite her age, extraordinarily coquettish.

M. Romorantin therefore installed himself at Trick's; he sat down at the table there at noon,

and remained at it until it was time to go to bed; whence they had to lead him, sometimes they had to carry him home because his legs entirely refused their office.

As to Madame Romorantin, it was necessary, in order to win her good graces, that young Trick should present her with some ornament or jewel, or some trifle that was in fashion, every day. But then Trick sometimes had permission to take a turn in the garden alone with Mademoiselle Seraphinette. This was a great favor, for the elderly coquette often said,—

"My daughter has been brought up with a care that is very rare now-a-days. She has received a fine education, but she has taken all her lessons under our eyes. We have never left her alone with one of her masters, even when he was ninety years old. Seraphinette is a musician, a painter; she knows geography, geometry, algebra, astronomy,—indeed she stands very high in astronomy, there's not a star in the heavens but she has its name at the tip of her tongue. She will no doubt become capable of predicting eclipses and comets. But as her master in that science was a very handsome bachelor, I thought she knew enough astronomy and need pursue the study no further. Our daughter is a treasure, and you must show yourself worthy of possessing her."

Trick neglected nothing that was likely to induce them to give him their treasure; he let old

Romorantin get tipsy every day with the best wine in his cellar; he almost ruined himself in giving presents to Madame Carabosse, and at last they promised Seraphinette to him, and allowed him to declare his love.

When Trick told the modest little blonde that he adored her and was about to become her husband, she only lowered her eyes and dropped a curtsey, as she answered,—

"Just as you like, monsieur."

This "just as you like" seemed rather vague to the young man, who answered, trying to show in his voice all the love he experienced,—

"Why, mademoiselle, will it not please you also?"

"Oh, it's all the same to me, monsieur."

"Oh, it is all the same to you whom you marry? You have not the slightest liking for me, then?"

"I don't know, monsieur."

"Ah, you don't know whether you love me?"

"Oh, I love everybody, monsieur."

Instead of finding little that was reassuring in this reply of his future spouse, Trick only saw in it the expression of an innocence of the highest order; he jumped with joy — he would have fallen on Seraphinette's neck had he dared, but respect restrained him, and he contented himself with kissing her hand respectfully, and saying to her,—

"Mademoiselle, you will be the cream of wives and I that of husbands!"

Trick did not for a moment imagine that such a union might turn out badly. He was at the height of his wishes. The same day he made a magnificent present to the old lady, who said to him,—

"You will be my son-in-law next week."

In the evening he brought home his future father-in-law, who said nothing, but who kissed him as they parted in a manner truly pathetic.

At the moment of re-entering his house Trick perceived that he had kept the key of his future father-in-law's garden in his pocket. Then an idea presented itself.

"Now," said he to himself, "old Romorantin will be snoring, and his wife will probably be doing the same, what if I should go back to their house? Mademoiselle Seraphinette's window looks on the garden and she is on the groundfloor; the young girl cannot have gone to sleep yet, one doesn't go to sleep so quickly when one is on the point of marriage; I shall knock softly on the window, she will open it, and we will talk for a little, I in the garden and she at her window; that will be quite proper, and after all, as I am to marry this lovely child in a week, there is no great harm in my going to talk with her a little in the moonlight — the weather is delightful, one can see almost as well as in the broad daylight."

Trick then returned towards the dwelling of the Romorantin family. By the help of the key which

he possessed, he opened the gate and soon found himself in the interior of the garden, which was in the front of the house and was quite large; there was a lawn, some flower-beds, a kitchen-garden, and then a part which had been made into an English garden; that is to say, there was shrubbery there, winding paths, clumps of bushes, and a thousand little turns which almost made it into a labyrinth.

In crossing this part of the garden, Trick thought he heard some one speaking near him, he stopped, the sound came from a lilac bush which was then full under the moonlight; Trick, being in the shadow, did not fear being seen. A sound which very much resembled several kisses rapidly succeeding each other, strongly aroused our young lover's curiosity, and parting the foliage he then perceived Mademoiselle Seraphinette, seated very near a handsome fellow who had his arm around her.

"I have taught you to know," he was saying, "nearly all the planets; the Great Bear, the Shepherd, the Three Kings and a host of others not half so bright as your eyes; now if we sit here and observe the moon in it's varying phases, the idiot you are going to marry will have nothing to teach you by way of astronomy."

So saying, the professor again showered kisses on the young girl, who seemed to receive and return them very willingly.

Trick remained for a moment petrified at this evidence of the fair Seraphinette's duplicity; but he soon made up his mind how to take it, and bursting into a shout of laughter, he went off singing a rather naughty song very apropos of the occasion.

And the next day when the old crow came to get tipsy at his house, he showed him to the door.

However, these two adventures had somewhat abated young Trick's vanity; he was really compelled to confess that he had been taken in, and that he was not so knowing about women as he had thought.

Had he been altogether frank, he would have said that he knew nothing at all about them.

Any one else would have stopped there, and would have given up the idea of marrying. But Trick was bent on doing so, and they say no one can escape his destiny.

Having one day met a very plain widow, of whom it was said, however, that she had made her deceased husband happy, Trick offered himself, and the proposal being agreeable to the widow, at the end of a fortnight they were married.

"Confound it," said Trick, the day after his wedding, "I have done well to take a wife who is not handsome, I shall at least be easy as to her fidelity; I know well that it is vexatious enough to be obliged to take an ugly one so I may be sure she will be faithful to me; but, after all, one

gets used to a face, while I shall never get wiser by being taken in."

Two months after his marriage, Trick, going down by chance into his cellar, where he hardly ever went, surprised his wife there flirting in the most outrageous way with a neighbor who had offered to come and cork his bottles.

"Hang it!" said Trick to himself, striking his forehead; "since I cannot prevent the very thing I wanted to avoid, I had much better have taken a pretty one."

And Trick, leaving his wife there, went off by himself to live in a remote spot, saying to himself,—

"I will never look on a woman, I will never have anything more to do with a woman — like that; it would be devilish nice if I should be taken in again."

Trick held to this stubbornly. He would not understand that in this lower world the happiest people are those who allow themselves to be the most easily taken in.

"Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas!"

A COUNTRY EXCURSION

"I SHOULD like you to have a day's pleasuring, tomorrow, you and the children; it's a devilish hard thing to get you to go out; when you have passed a couple of hours at the Tuileries in the morning there's an end of it, there's your whole day gone; you make everybody go home again, and in the evening you think that you have enjoyed yourself."

"But, my dear—"

"But, my dearest, permit me to speak first; one must not grow egotistical and live only for one's self. Our daughter is now over fifteen years old, and at that age a girl likes to go out, to walk about, and to see something beside her mother's skirts."

"My dear, you know very well we have some people coming, and Léonore—"

"Yes, I know we are expecting company, among them that young genre painter who affects the romantic, for which reason he has allowed his whiskers to grow and has a bunch of hair on his lower lip. Whether he be classic or romantic is all the same to me, provided he earns money. If he really loves Léonore, we shall see; I do not say that I will or will not give her to him, there is plenty of time to think about that. But now, to return to

my plan for tomorrow. We must have a little jaunt, we must go to some festival in the outskirts of Paris. A village fête is so very pleasing. But you know nothing as to that, you never want to pass the barriers; however, it seems to me that the inhabitants of Paris ought to be acquainted with the outskirts, at least, besides, they really belong to Paris; people get their newspapers at noon instead of at eight o'clock, and they pay four sous postage on their letters instead of three, that is the only difference; we have many men of talent and merit, such as poets, painters, publishers even — that is to say, retired publishers — who live in the suburbs now because they can live cheaper there, where they pay a sou a pound less for meat. You must know there is great economy in that. On two hundred pounds of meat consumed during the year, there is ten francs saved. It is true a man must spend quite twenty-five francs in cab hire to go back and forth to Paris, but, all the same, it is very economical to live in the country — we shall go there tomorrow."

"I am not a great walker, and —"

"We'll take an omnibus or a hackney coach; are there not conveyances everywhere now? Presently we shall be able to go round the world for six sous. Why, here's our daughter jumping for joy already, and Alexandre, poor boy, how he is going to enjoy himself in the country — hey!"

"Oh, yes, papa."

"That's all settled, then; now you must arrange everything so as to be ready to start not later than noon, for one must not set out at four o'clock in the afternoon to go to dine in the country. I'll go and inquire where there is a village festival in progress. You will see something you never saw before, Madame Barbeau, and you must tell me how you like it."

M. Barbeau had left his wife; you think, perhaps, that he went to obtain information for the next day and to settle upon the locality to which he should take his family? Not at all, M. Barbeau had not taken ten steps after leaving home before he had quite forgotten all he had said to his wife of his plan for the morrow.

He met a friend, first of all, took his arm, wished him good-day, and inquired about his health, without leaving his friend time to answer. Then he entered into conversation, if one can call that conversation where one person does all the talking; and note well this fact, M. Barbeau incessantly recalled new incidents which led to other stories, which necessitated further explanations in such a manner that it seemed as though he would never be done. No one could remember the point from whence he started, in fact, he often forgot it himself; for apropos of a play at the variétiés he would ramble off to Belgium or pâtes de Lesage; his discourse was exactly like the "Arabian Nights," one story led to another, and that to several others.

I defy any one to get away from him, and when by chance one wished to slip in the slightest remark or reflection, M. Barbeau would stop him, saying,—

"Pardon me, I had not finished."

But for all this, M. Barbeau was a good liver, a jolly, straightforward, rotund man, in mind as well as physiognomy; cheerful, jovial, amiable even, except to chatty people, who never could get on with him.

He was a retired publisher, and had known many men of talent; he could recall a word of one, a trait of another; he loved to bring them in in his conversation, which was amusing to those who cared to listen to him. He had done a great deal of business, of which he had forgotten the disagreeable and remembered only the pleasant episodes. He was of a happy disposition; never uneasy in advance, never so even in difficult moments; absent-minded, careless, seeing only the good side, even in the most vexatious things. When his business went badly, when he had a thousand reasons for being troubled in the present and uneasy as to the future, what did M. Barbeau? Why, as soon as it was light he left his house and went off to pass his whole day in playing dominos. But he remained friendly with everybody; that is the best praise that can be accorded him.

Madame Barbeau was as quiet as her husband was lively, and as the extremes thus met, it was a

proof that they were in accord. Their daughter was fifteen years old, she was timid and spoke little; their son was ten, and already made as much noise as his father. This was the whole family. On the following day, it being Sunday, the mamma and the children were ready, dressed to go out, at eleven o'clock in the morning; but it was past noon and they waited vainly for M. Barbeau, who had gone out very early, saying he would not be five minutes absent.

The genre painter had come to pay a visit to the ladies and had asked permission to accompany them on their excursion into the country, he wanted to make some sketches there.

But time passed and the head of the family did not return. The young girl sighed as she looked at the clock; the painter sighed as he looked at the young girl, and the little boy looked at his new trousers. Only the mamma preserved her good-humored expression, after keeping house for twenty years she was used to awaiting her husband.

At length, just as it was striking two, M. Barbeau came in with a little, dry, withered man who bowed graciously to the whole family, while the retired publisher exclaimed,—

"Here I am. Just imagine, I totally forgot our country excursion, I met a man with whom I lunched, a man whom I hadn't seen for a dozen years at least, and a good many adventures had befallen him, which he has been telling me, and

which I will relate to you on the way. After lunch we were walking quietly to the Palais-Royal; there I met Grigou here, who said to me as we chatted, 'It's a very fine day, I should like to go to the country.' Thereupon I smote my forehead and exclaimed,—

"'Good heavens! and they are all expecting me at the house to go to a village festival.' I proposed to Grigou to come with us and he accepted; the more fools there are, the more everybody will laugh. Come, wife, send some one for a carriage, and be sure and tell the maid to get a large one."

The carriage came; although it was large, the party had some trouble in stowing themselves away in it, because M. Barbeau himself almost took up one side of the vehicle. They did the best they could by putting the children on one seat with their mother, while M. Grigou was almost hidden behind M. Barbeau, to whom he said, "I shall be stifled," and the latter answered him, "You're all right — try not to move too much."

"Where are we to go?" asked the coachman.

At this very natural question, each looked at the other, and Madame Barbeau said to her husband,—

"Well, my dear, where are we going?"

"Devil take me! if I know anything about it! Coachman, where is there a fête champêtre today?"

The coachman reflected for some time, then he answered,—

"Mercy! there is one at Tivoli, at la Chaumière."

"That won't do; we want to go into the country, to some place where they are having a junket."

"Oh, that's different. Would you like me to take you to Batignolles to Father Lathuille's?"

"We know Father Lathuille; one dines well at his place, but that is not quite far enough out in the country for us."

"I think there is a fête at Belleville."

"Let's go to Belleville, then; off we go!"

"But," suggested M. Grigou, trying to show himself from behind M. Barbeau's back, "Belleville is not very countrified, it's like a Parisian faubourg; we can do better than that."

"Come, you always differ in opinion from the rest of us. We must amuse ourselves at Belleville, we shall see the fête. Let me manage the thing, and don't move about so much."

The little man said nothing more; he only tried to get an arm free, in order that he might draw his handkerchief from his pocket to wipe his face.

During the whole ride M. Barbeau related the adventures of the friend he had met in the morning. They let him talk on without interrupting him; this being the family custom. The young painter looked at Léonore, while he seemed to be absorbed in her father's stories. As to Friend Grigou, he was not always content to be a listener; he liked also to relate his story, to say his word,

but he let Barbeau talk in the carriage, saying to himself,—

"I shall have my turn when we get into the fields."

They soon reached Belleville. The coachman stopped before the Ile d'Amour. The party alighted, dismissed the carriage, and walked for a short distance along the principal street of the village, looking for some signs of a festival. But all was very quiet; there was not even a shop where they sold gingerbread or cream-cakes. The mamma walked sedately along, holding her daughter's arm; the little boy marched in the middle of the gutter and tried to get himself dirty, that he might at least be doing something; the painter in vain sought a country site in the principal street of Belleville, and Grigou looked around him in a very bad humor, muttering,—

"Is this what they call the country?"

Suddenly, M. Barbeau stopped in front of the party, saying,—

"Here we've been, for the past fifteen minutes, walking along like imbeciles; do you call this amusing?"

"Not at all."

"I should say not."

"And so should I, the coachman is a stupid-head, there's no fête here; but we are not obliged to stay. Let's go up the village and go to the Romainville wood, perhaps there's a fête there."

"Romainville! I don't like that wood," said M. Grigou; "once when I wanted to have a chestnut—"

"Come, Grigou, you are never of the same opinion as anybody else, it is necessary to put one's self aside in society; you always want your own way! it's ridiculous!"

"Why, it appears to me, on the contrary—"

"We will go to Romainville; that is settled."

They left Belleville, crossed the Saint-Fargeau park, they were in the country.

"Oh, papa, a donkey!" shouted the little boy.

"Do you want to ride a donkey?"

"Oh, yes, papa!"

"We'll hire one, then, we must amuse ourselves in the country! Nonore will ride also — and you, wife?"

"Why, the idea! are you mad, M. Barbeau?"

"Would you like a horse better? I'll hire you a little pony."

"Neither a horse nor a donkey; as if I should be able to hold on!"

"Grigou, you'll have a horse?"

"Me? I haven't mounted one for I don't know how long — wait a bit—"

"It's not worth while, I'll go and hire some horses."

M. Barbeau had two donkeys and two horses saddled. His son and his daughter mounted on the quieter animals. M. Grigou wished in vain to

resist. His friend got him on horseback despite himself; then he bestrode the other courser and the procession started, followed by the mamma, whose feet were already very bad, and the genre painter, who would have liked to stop to sketch a view.

M. Barbeau and his friend soon lost sight of the donkeys. They entered the wood, and in a sloping path which M. Barbeau thought best to take at a trot, Friend Grigou shot over his horse's head, the animal's front legs failing him.

"I was sure that would happen to me," exclaimed Grigou, calling for help and uttering mournful groans.

"What's the matter with you?" said M. Barbeau, coming back.

"You see very well — I fell."

"Because you don't know how to stick on."

"Why, this confounded horse threw me."

"It is that you don't know how to hold your horse."

"It is your fault!"

"Come, you are not hurt. That's nothing; in the country one must amuse one's self. Let's go back and find the ladies."

"Let us go back; but I shan't mount again; I shall lead my horse by the bridle."

"You are too timid."

The gentlemen returned towards the edge of the wood; they saw a donkey rolling on the sand after throwing the lady who was riding him, and who

had fallen in such a way that the skirt of her dress hid her face.

"By Jove! that's delightful," cried M. Barbeau. "Look there, Grigou, what a pity Bellefeuille is not here. What a pretty genre picture he would make of that!"

Grigou sought his spectacles that he might the better see this picture, but before he had found them Madame Barbeau came running on the opposite side and had drawn down the skirt which hid the features of the young person who had fallen; then M. Barbeau saw it was his daughter on the ground, and he did not think it quite so funny. He got down from his horse and ran to his wife, who was wringing her hands and crying.

"What is the matter here?"

"My daughter has had a fall—this ugly donkey insisted on lying down."

"I know all that. Are you hurt, Léonore, my dear?"

"Oh, dear no, papa!"

"Then don't think any more of it."

"Don't think any more of it! That is easy for you to say," said the mamma; "but my daughter fell in a very disagreeable manner."

"I know all that. Did Bellefeuille see her, do you think?"

"No," answered madame, "thank heaven he had remained behind."

"Then there is no harm done. All's well.

Hello, Bellefeuille! my dear fellow, have the kindness to take back these horses and this donkey, we've had enough of them. We'll sit down and roll on the grass while we wait for you."

The young artist was not at all delighted at this commission, but he dared not refuse; he started on a horse, leading the donkey and the other horse by the bridle. M. Barbeau shouted to him that he looked as if he were imitating Franconi.

"We'll go into that restaurant down there, and inquire if there's a fête about here," said M. Barbeau.

"I see nothing to indicate one," said Grigou, "but I am already hungry."

"However, it is not dinner time yet, we have lots of time."

"Lots of time! because you've had a good luncheon you're not in a hurry."

"My wife is waiting for us on the grass with her daughter. I'll go and find out if there's a festival about here, and where it is held."

Madame Barbeau wished nothing better than to sit and rest with her daughter, and Grigou followed his friend Barbeau.

The restaurateur to whom they presented themselves was as talkative as M. Barbeau; in answer to a single question he involved himself so far in his phrases that he could not get out of the tangle; in giving a direction, he began by describing the whole neighborhood; and when anyone asked him

if he could give them dinner he enumerated the number of dishes he could prepare, and those he had invented, and even gave a recipe for the sauce, and all that in order to inform his customer that he had nothing but roast veal.

M. Barbeau got into a perspiration with impatience, he interrupted the man abruptly in the middle of a description of a dessert dish of his own composition, and said to him,—

"I have been asking you for an hour if there is a fête at Romainville, if we shall find a good dinner at your place, and instead of answering me you talk about sweetmeats, jams, and jellies. Do you suppose I came to you to learn cooking?"

"Monsieur — what is it? what have I done? have I insulted you? If I have insulted you, monsieur, I am a man and I will give you every satisfaction."

"Go to the devil! why, you're proposing a duel to me now. We won't dine here, for you talk too much and don't attend to your business."

M. Barbeau left the restaurant followed by Grigou, who said,—

"We must dine somewhere, however."

They seated themselves on the grass. M. Bellefeuille came back with little Alexandre, who wriggled as he walked, because he had torn his trousers while riding the donkey and was afraid his mamma would see it. But just then mother and daughter were admiring the very fine walnuts on a tree at a

little distance from where they were seated, and M. Barbeau was deep in a story which was not at all amusing to Grigou because there was no end to it.

"I must tell you, then," said the retired publisher, "that one day being in the country with some friends we took upon ourselves to make a big, jolly fellow called Duloiret tipsy—he had just come up from his province."

"Duloiret! why, I knew him!" cried Grigou.

"That's all right, but the fact that you knew him has no bearing on my story."

"Yes, but I know what they made him do, and to prove it, I'll tell you the story, and—"

"No, permit me, I ought to know better than you, and I believe I can tell it better also."

And without awaiting his friend Grigou's permission, M. Barbeau resumed his anecdote, which would necessarily lead to a dozen others. However, in the midst of his recital the father of the family perceived that his son and daughter were absorbed in something else; he said to them,—

"What are you looking up into the air for, while I am speaking?"

"Those are walnuts over there and very fine ones."

"Mamma, do you want me to climb the tree?" exclaimed little Alexandre.

"No, my friend," said papa, "you have torn your trousers enough already; if you should climb the trees you would enlarge the rent so as not to

be able to go back to Paris. Grigou, come and get some nuts for the ladies, you see Bellefeuille is making his sketches; you aren't very gallant, Grigou."

"Why don't you climb up yourself?"

"I am not light like you."

"But is it permitted to climb the trees?"

"To get a few nuts? Why, don't be afraid."

Grigou decided to climb up and beat down a few nuts; he preferred to do it to listening to M. Barbeau's stories.

The latter extended himself on the grass beside Bellefeuille, and said to him,—

"If I were a painter I would sketch all the natural things I could see."

"Monsieur, that is not so easy, to—"

"Pardon me, allow me to unfold my idea, I have had a few happy thoughts in my life. I have often given an author a subject, an idea, for a book, and those books always sold well."

"Why, a book, monsieur, is not at all—"

"I hadn't finished, my dear fellow. Hold, look at these people who are passing before us. It is Paris in the country, here."

"That is to say, these are bourgeois, workmen."

"That's what they are, and if I were a man of letters or a painter I would profit by it. Wait, here are a couple coming along; these are inhabitants of Paris, as it is Sunday they are very well dressed. They put their heads too near together when they speak, and look at each other too often,

to be man and wife. The young man is pouting a little; the lady was perhaps unwilling to go into the wood with him. But they are going into a restaurant, they will have a private room and make it all up again. He seems like a dealer in novelties and lingerie; notice what a choice collarette the lady has on, and that the young man's waistcoat and trousers are made of new stuff.

"Who are these going down there laughing and jumping and making noise and dust? It is unnecessary to ask, they are grisettes, but grisettes of the second order; they are none the less cheerful for having set aside all ceremony. There are five of them, and not a single poor little man among them, but that does not prevent them from laughing, from having a thoroughly good time; these damsels would not think they were amusing themselves if they did not make as much noise as an army in retreat; they poke fun at everyone they meet; there, they are stopping now, and consulting as they look at the eating-house. I'll wager they are counting what money they have among the five to see if they can go in to dinner there. They open their bags, they calculate. You see the result; instead of going into the best restaurant hereabouts, they turn towards a little inn; their means will not permit them more than home-made wine and omelette and bacon. But they will indemnify themselves this evening in making the first imbecile who wants to court them pay for beer or punch.

"Then all the week, while binding shoes or making buttonholes, they will remember the pleasures of Sunday. They must have some philosophy, or a great fund of good-humor, to make one day's pleasure suffice for a whole week. It is true there are some rich people, and people of position, who don't amuse themselves one day out of seven even. There is compensation for everything.

"Ah, here are some of the natives; they are strong and robust, but they are ugly. In general the peasants on the outskirts of Paris are not pretty, nor does one see anywhere such picturesque headgear as in Normandy or Franche-Comté. These flat caps are not at all becoming, and these peasants always wear short gowns which do not allow one to see whether they are well-made or not. The peasant who is with them has put on his police helmet, to show that he is in the National Guard; since it is deemed well that these good people should be drilled, they believe, even when working, that it is their duty to assume something of a military appearance, and wherefore? it is not a crime to be more at one's ease in a blouse than in a uniform.

"But here is a workman in his Sunday clothes, who is bringing his family here; he's drawing a little wicker carriage containing his two last babies, with the provisions for dinner. His wife is behind him; she carries nothing, but it is easy to be seen that in the near future one of the youngsters in the go-cart will be ousted from his proud position by

a newcomer; she is cross and disagreeable, complains all along the road, and never speaks to her husband except to say, 'Take care! you are jolting it over the stones; you'll upset them. How carelessly you do draw it.' And the poor man, who is bathed in perspiration, tries to persuade himself that he is enjoying his Sunday, and works like a convict during the week to procure this pleasant diversion.

"Why, here's a cavalcade! Why, my dear Bellefeuille, is not that worth the trouble of sketching? these horsemen with otter-skin caps and ragged neckties. As they have no straps to their trousers, those garments are pulled almost up to their knees, and as they have no stockings in their shoes they show their naked legs to the passers-by, which on horseback produces a very pretty effect. On seeing these horsemen in tatters one is tempted to say, 'Instead of hiring a horse at thirty sous an hour, would it not be better if you were to buy some stockings?' They might answer you, 'Don't meddle in what doesn't concern you.' That's right; that's why I say nothing to them."

While M. Barbeau was making his original review, which he had not yet completed, Friend Grigou had directed his steps towards the walnut tree at which he was throwing stones; how this game reminded him of his youth! he was delighted, and every time a walnut fell at his feet he shouted, "There's another!" He had launched his twen-

tieth stone, and picked up his eighth walnut, which does not say much for his skill, when a little man, decorated with a tin badge, armed with a great sabre, and having a three-cornered hat on his head, of which the point was placed exactly over the nose, dashed at him and seized him by the collar, shouting,—

"Ah, I've caught you at it! Such brazon effrontery — on a Sunday, and before everybody. Come along to prison, Parisian."

Grigou tried to excuse himself and to get away; but the keeper, who was usually half seas over on week days, on Sundays got completely tipsy and would not listen to reason or let go of his man. Several peasants had already come running, and they were not sparing of their insults to Grigou. Peasants are always delighted when they can molest city people. To hear them one would think that the inhabitants of Paris came to the country only to pillage and destroy; however, these farm laborers and ploughmen, who are pictured to us sometimes as possessed of all the domestic virtues, while they really are, for the most part, envious, jealous, suspicious, crafty, and scheming, what would they do with their produce if the people of the cities, whom they incessantly berail, would not buy it? No doubt the dwellers in the cities would be equally inconvenienced if the country folk did not cultivate the fruits of the earth for them. But what does that prove? That we all have need one of the

other. Is that any reason why we should tear each other to pieces continually?

Grigou's shouts had been heard by the party on the grass. M. Barbeau rose, and ran to the midst of the group. He asked, inquired, allowed no one to answer; but he easily guessed what was the matter when he saw the rural guard holding Grigou by the collar.

"What are you going to do? Take a man to prison for a walnut?"

"Monsieur, it is —"

"I can see what it is very well. Is it worth while to make such an uproar about a small matter like that?"

"Oh, when a —"

"You want us to compensate you, eh? Well, here is a hundred sous, go and leave us in peace."

The keeper waved away the five-franc piece, perhaps because there were people around him, and the peasants shouted,—

"You must take him before the mayor at Romainville. All these wicked Parisians come to rob us —"

"You are very fortunate that the Parisians, whom you insult, buy your milk and your potatoes."

"Why, if they didn't buy them we should eat them, that is all."

"Yes, and then how would you buy shoes and clothing and wine, and pay your taxes?"

The churls had no answer to this, but they shouted again,—

"Bring him to the mayor; bring him to the mayor." And the rural guard, who was getting quite softened at seeing Grigou ready to cry, put on his hat hindside before and led off his prisoner.

"Let us go to the mayor," said M. Barbeau.

"What? What is the matter?" demanded Madame Barbeau, who came up at that moment with the rest of the party.

"Nothing of any moment. We are going to Romainville, before the mayor, for a couple of walnuts that Grigou knocked off a tree. It's rather an unpleasant joke; but we have nothing to do, it will be a walk for us, and perhaps we shall see a fête when we get to the village."

The company was by no means delighted at the prospect of this walk; but as M. Barbeau had already gone on with the accused and the witnesses, they could do nothing but follow. On the way M. Barbeau tried to prove to the peasants that they were wrong to arrest a man on account of a walnut, and thereupon he cited to them twenty anecdotes of undoubted veracity; while Grigou kept saying in a low tone,—

"You are the cause of all this — it was you who — "

M. Barbeau cut him short by nudging him in the side with his elbow and whispered, "Be silent, you are injuring your case."

They reached the village of Romainville, where there was no more appearance of a fête than at Belleville. They went to the mayor's house, escorted by all the children in the place, these, added to the peasants who were conducting Grigou, and the rest of our party, made a very nice little procession, of which M. Barbeau looked like the leader. He walked proudly with his head up, perorating as he went along; he had frightened the rural guard, who began to be afraid he had made a blunder, and even the peasants thought that a man who talked so much must end in being in the right. In fact, any one would have sworn it was M. Barbeau who had had Grigou arrested. They reached the mayor's house; he was not at home, he was at the town hall.

"Come to the town hall," cried Barbeau. But as Madame Barbeau and her children were weary, the family seated itself on a stone bench with M. Bellefeuille, who prepared to sketch the entrance to a milk house.

They reached the town hall; the mayor was not there. A neighbor informed them that he had gone to Father Antoine's, where there was a dispute between some of the drinkers.

The rural guard and the peasants looked at each other undecidedly, it was easy to be seen that they were tired of walking about with their prisoner, and that, with some conciliatory words and a few glasses of wine, all might be amicably settled. But

Barbeau would not understand this; without listening to Grigou, who pulled him by his coat, he cried,—

"Come to Father Antoine's. We must see the mayor. I shall be pleased to see him. They would arrest this gentleman, and we must have justice."

"Why," said Grigou, in a low tone "as they seem kindly disposed now—"

"That's nothing to do with it; come to Father Antoine's; I will not be walked about like this for nothing! This cannot be passed off like this."

They arrived at Father Antoine's, who sold cakes, bacon, and wine. The mayor had left, the quarrel being ended. Mother Antoine believed he had gone back to the town hall to give judgment in the matter of Jean-Marie and Gaspard, who had a well in common, and who never could agree as to whose turn it was to supply a new rope.

"Then we'll go back to the town hall," said M. Barbeau. But the rural guard, who was accustomed to rest and drink at Father Antoine's, had already taken his seat at a table; the peasants did the same, saying,—

"Oh, well, there's nothin' to do but let the gentleman go; he won't take the walnuts again. We've had enough walking for to-day. That's so, ain't it, keeper?"

The keeper answered, as he poured out some wine, "Yes—we've had enough of it—for this time."

Grigou was delighted, he was about to thank everybody, when Barbeau came between him and the guard saying,—

"I don't understand this at all, gentlemen, you cannot arrest a man for nothing. I want to return to the town hall."

At these words Grigou became purple with anger; he exclaimed in his turn,—

"Hang it, M. Barbeau, that is too much! When this unhappy business is settled, when these gentlemen are willing to forget my heedlessness, you must drag me to the mayor, forsooth!"

"Yes, monsieur; because I like things to be done regularly, because I detest arbitrariness and —"

"Go to the devil with your arbitrariness! It was you who told me to thwack down the walnuts."

"And what does that prove?"

"That you get people into scrapes and leave them there."

"You see well that I'm getting you out of it."

"You are a pigheaded, obstinate fellow!"

"And you are an idiot!"

The dispute between them grew so warm that the guard and the peasants were obliged to interpose between the two friends. At length their spirits quieted down. Barbeau seated himself beside the guard, ordered wine, and paid for everybody. Grigou treated to some cakes with strong butter. They ate and drank and became good friends.

While talking and drinking, M. Barbeau said to the peasants,—

"Where are they holding the fête?"

"The fête? why there's no fête at Romainville, today!"

"There's no fête at Romainville? The devil! that is what we came here for, however."

"There's a fête at Bagnolet."

"Ah, that's lucky! we'll go and see the fête at Bagnolet — it's not very far, I think?"

"No, a short quarter of a league. Go down the highway as far as a road on the left and you are there."

"Come, Grigou, a last cup, and we'll be off; our party are waiting for us on a stone bench. Good-by, my good fellows; your good health! I bear you no grudge."

M. Barbeau and Grigou at length left Father Antoine's, and the retired publisher said to his friend,—

"You see everything came out well, I was very calm."

"It's not your fault it didn't turn out worse."

"Let it drop! you didn't understand my tactics; if I had looked like a blubberer, as you did, we should still be their prisoners!"

They rejoined the party. Bellefeuille had had time to sketch three cows and all the courtyard.

"We are going to Bagnolet," cried M. Barbeau as soon as he came within hailing distance of his

wife. "It's a charming village, not two steps off and all down hill."

"To Bagnolet!" said Madame Barbeau; "why, what are you thinking of, monsieur? It's getting dark."

"What does that matter to us? I think, dearest, you need not be afraid with me."

"But we are very tired."

"It's all going down hill, I tell you."

"We are dying of hunger."

"We will dine at Bagnolet."

No one replied, and they set out on their way and arrived at the entrance to Bagnolet at night-fall. This charming village is composed of but one narrow street and that nearly as long as the Faubourg Saint-Martin. As they advanced they heard a hubbub which seemed to be increasing, they could not distinguish if it was laughter, cries, or songs, but it was going on continually.

"Good enough! one can tell there's a fête here," said Barbeau; "do you hear those jolly fellows, how they are amusing themselves?"

"I don't know if they are amusing themselves," responded Madame Barbeau; "but that noise frightens me. One would say they were fighting."

"It frightens me too," said Nonore, pressing against her mother.

"If they are fighting," said Grigou, "I should like it quite as well if we did not see the fête."

"Come, now, you are dreaming. Laughing,

dancing, does that frighten you? Come along, I'll be responsible for everything."

They reached the square of the place, where the festival was in progress. This square was large, like that of the Chevalier-du-Guet in Paris. In a little corner, that had been sanded and roped off, two violins and a tambourine made music for the youth of the place to dance to. Opposite the enclosure were two trucks on wheels, one containing gingerbread, the other sausages. The whole was lighted with lanterns placed on the ground and candles surrounded with paper.

At the moment the party arrived, a scuffle was taking place between the peasants, of whom the greater part were tipsy. The countrywomen had immediately sought refuge in another direction, from whence they looked on at the gentlemen fighting. But at last the dispute was settled, the ladies came back, the men took their partners and resumed the dance they had left.

"You can see they are enjoying themselves here," said M. Barbeau. "They make some noise, it is true, because peasants have not the habit of speaking gently."

"This, then, is what they call a fête champêtre?" said Grigou.

"Wait a bit, we haven't seen everything yet. But first of all we must look for an eating-house."

They sought, they looked everywhere, but there was no more of an eating-house at Bagnolet than

there was a fête at Romainville. They discovered, however, a small public house over the door of which was written, "Rustic garden and landscape."

"Do you understand what that means?" asked M. Barbeau of the painter.

"By Jove, no!"

"Nor I; but all the same we will go in here, and we'll ask for a 'landscape' where we can get something to eat."

They entered the drinking-shop but could not stay in the room, for the smell of ale made them ill; they passed into the rustic garden behind the house, and there the wine merchant asserted that they saw a landscape, for he had pasted on the wall at the bottom of his garden some paper at thirteen sous a roll, on which were printed canaries and paroquets.

The party, who were famished with hunger, stopped at a table which stood in front of the "landscape" and asked what they could have for dinner. There was nothing for them but some lightly salted pork and some fresh eggs, everything else had been devoured by the peasants who had come to the fête. This repast, washed down by Bagnolet wine, seemed very rustic indeed to the Parisians. They hastily despatched it, and left the "landscape."

The ball was in full progress and after cramming the party with gingerbread by way of dessert, M. Barbeau positively wanted to make them dance.

He drew his wife along in spite of her resistance, Bellefeuille took Nonore's hand,— and there they were in the sanded enclosure. The orchestra started, the peasants had started before; the dance was exceedingly lively, when suddenly some other peasants came up, looking furious, and shouted to those who were cutting their capers, "We told you not to dance with our wives!" and without awaiting an answer they punched the dancers right and left. The latter replied in kind, all the countrymen at the fête came running to take part with one side or the other, and the combat became general. The women fled, shrieking, the children howled, but the violins could still be heard above the din. In the midst of the confusion caused by the sudden onset of the peasants, and the rain of blows they were showering on each other, Madame Barbeau had lost her husband and her daughter had been separated from her partner, and they had some trouble in leaving the enclosure. They called the husband and father, but their voices were lost in those of the peasants who were shouting to separate the combatants. At the corner of the square these ladies came upon Grigou, who had just been picked up by two men, and on whom four peasants had been fighting furiously for five minutes. Grigou was completely knocked up; but he found enough strength to leave the fête and the village. Then M. Bellefeuille appeared, he had lost his hat, but he had found little Alexandre and brought him to

his mother. Only M. Barbeau was missing, without whom they could not leave Bagnolet; he came at length without a necktie, with his collar torn, but still in a good-humor.

"Oh, the madmen, how they are going it!" cried he, as he rejoined his wife.

"Oh, my dear, where have you been? I was very uneasy."

"I have been fighting."

"With whom?"

"I haven't the least idea; but, by Jove! everybody was fighting, and I did like the others, I tried a round with two or three of them, and then they made way for me."

"Good heavens! what a country excursion."

"Do you want to leave here?"

"Yes, monsieur, and as quickly as possible."

"Well, let's get on the way then. But I don't promise you we shall find a carriage at the barrière."

"Ah, M. Barbeau," groaned Grigou, "you'll never again get me to a festival in the outskirts of Paris."

THE SLIDES OF A MAGIC LANTERN

ATTENTION, messieurs and mesdames, we have the honor to present to you first the picture of a country festival in the outskirts of Paris.

The fête is at Loges, near Saint-Germain; this fête being one of the most brilliant and select, because, being farther from the capital than Saint-Cloud, Vincennes, Pantin and other places, the simple bourgeois of Paris cannot go there afoot, carrying a pasty in a napkin and a fine melon under his arm. To go to Loges one must have a carriage; every one cannot afford that.

See this line of landaus, caleches, tilburys. The company would be select if all these vehicles belonged to the ones who came in them.

Let us go a little deeper into the wood; but we must be careful not to fall over the roasts which have been placed here and there in these cooking-pots on the grass. The welkin rings with the joyful shouts of the peasants and the gay laughter of the citizens. On all sides are people laughing, dancing, or eating. These hastily prepared tents belong to travelling restaurateurs; you may see pyramids of partridges, pigeons, and sausages; that which you would care nothing for in the city seems

delightful to you in the country; these fine ladies, even, do not disdain a piece of veal cooked on the grass and often seasoned with dust.

But see on the right what a brilliant ball, this is for the fashionable people; the villagers are not admitted there. They are dancing, though they do not look as though they were; but it is good form now to dance as though one were not dancing; on the other hand, they look languishing and put on finical airs, they whisper in their partner's ears, or squeeze her hand very delicately.

Look to the left; that is a village ball and is distinctly opposed to the other; the peasant men see who can jump highest, the peasant women shake and joggle; if they don't keep time to the music, at least it is easy to be seen they are dancing. The first is the polite ball, the second is the natural. Let us pass to another picture.

I have the honor to present to you the studio of a celebrated painter. If you would like to see a picture of the most unstudied and admired disorder examine the interior of this studio, while the artist, giving full scope to his genius, finishes a historical picture which must still further augment his reputation.

Look at this table placed to the right, on which are the remains of a breakfast; lest this disorder frighten you, remember that it was to the confusion of tongues of the builders of the tower of Babel that we owe the birth of divers idioms, and

remember also that in the midst of contrasts one often finds lessons of philosophy. This table will furnish several.

See this colored bottle, and this flask which came from a fashionable woman's bag; the head of the Venus de Medici on a piece of cheese; the model's dirty, crumpled bonnet covering the head of a Roman emperor; some ham in a Greek helmet; three finger-joint bones on a penny roll; a Diana's foot on the thighbone of an Antinous; a bottle of oil on a silk handkerchief; some vermilion on a Death's head; some cigars wrapped up in a Greek tunic, and a volume of Béranger's songs on the Holy Bible.

This table shows us the nothingness of human grandeur. It is with men as with things. A time will come when we shall find ourselves placed near a being to whom we were utter strangers.

But forgive me, messieurs and mesdames, I forget sometimes that I ought to show you the magic lantern and not point morals for you. My love of talking leads me astray sometimes. Let us pass to another picture.

See this enchanting scene, embellished by nature; how green are these trees, how flowery these meads, how transparent these waters, and how blue these skies; it is the "interior of the moon" taken from the Pont des Arts. This is an exactly correct representation; the artist with a telescope, which carried him to this place, was able to distinguish the

inhabitants of the moon so clearly that he perceived even those who had gone down to their cellars, for they have cellars in the moon and they drink wine there made from seedless grapes which are very common in that country. The fare there is very good, people live well there and the lunatics are very plump. There are many very agreeable things in this country. It is daylight there forty-eight hours at a time and the evenings are very short; this is no doubt why they have not yet introduced lighting by gas. The houses are as high as the towers of Notre Dame, and the smallest trees are higher than the houses. But you wish perhaps to know something of the customs of the inhabitants; let us examine the details of the picture.

Notice this young girl at the window of this house; her looks are constantly turned towards the same point. First of all her face expresses pleasure; it shines in her eyes, a vivid carnation colors her cheeks and she passes her pretty little fingers through her ringlets in order to repair the havoc the wind has made in her tresses. She is singing in a low tone, and smiling as she looks at the road by which the one she is waiting for will come. But for some moments she has not sung. Her hair floats in abandonment, the color has fled from her cheeks; her eyes express fear, uneasiness, the falling and rising of her breast is quickened, her heart palpitates; he comes not, although the hour

he had appointed is long past. A thousand thoughts agitate her; a thousand suspicions are presented to her mind. Where is he? What is he doing now? Thus terminate all her conjectures. How painful is suspense! Each moment is more than a century and the imagination augments the suffering of the heart. Perhaps he is with a rival; he has made her the sweetest vows, he has lavished the tenderest caresses upon her. Poor little thing. Her tears are already falling. Why, what sudden change is this? Why this joyful expression even in the midst of her tears? and this sweet blush which colors her charming face? She smiles with delight, for she sees him; she would like to scold him for that hour of suspense; but her heart will not allow her, past evil is but a bad dream. In love a moment's happiness causes one to forget a century of pain.

Now you see, ladies, how women love in the moon; it is for you to say whether you experience the same torments and fears when you are expecting the one you love.

But let us penetrate into this boudoir. What ails this young woman? She is sad, she sighs, she is grieved. Has her husband been unfaithful? No, her husband does not trouble her. Is her cashmere shawl less handsome than her friend's? Has some one neglected to invite her to dance at the last ball? It is much worse than that; she has found a white hair. A white hair! and she is

only twenty-nine! In vain her maid has assured her it was only a light-colored one. "No, no!" she exclaims, "It is white, I am sure of it. White hairs at twenty-nine! Why, it is cruel, it's frightful. I am already growing old, then. What times we are living in. But there is Madame Valmont, whose hair is as black as ebony at forty-five. She has it dyed, perhaps."

"Madame," said her lady's maid, "Mademoiselle Isaure, who is only twenty-five is obliged to wear a front, oh, there are other things beside age that whiten the hair."

This speech consoled the young woman a little. So you see, mesdames, that in the moon white hairs alarm beauty; to whom, however, they impart a venerable appearance. But ladies do not care so much about being respected; they want to be loved and admired. It is the ladies in the moon of whom I speak.

Let us now give a little attention to the gentlemen; who is this stout gentleman, walking about this beautiful garden, with an air of importance that is altogether comical? This is M. Jonas, who, at forty years of age, said to himself,—

"It is very singular, I have mental ability, means, and good personal appearance, and yet I succeed in nothing; I fail in every business that I undertake. I have no friends, nobody pays any attention to me. I must marry a pretty woman, that will give me importance in society."

In fact, M. Jonas did marry; his wife is cheerful, lively, agreeable; she is passionately fond of music and dancing, and M. Jonas' house has become the haunt of young men of fashion. The dear husband has more friends than he can count.

But look on this side, you will see fatuous fellows who give decided opinions on things they do not understand; you will see men of talent—modest, retiring, seek their pleasure in study, the arts, and friendship. Over there are some stout men, made of money, liberal entertainers; they give magnificent dinners, the cost of one of which would feed ten poor families. Here you see men glutted with wealth who yet seek more; who keep their eyes incessantly on those in power, praising to-day those they depreciated yesterday, and disparaging to-morrow those whom they praise to-day, according as it serves their cupidity and their unworthy ambition. Look again; you will see men of letters envious of their fellows, fools puffed up with vanity, moralists devoid of honor, hypocrites in favor, rigorists devoid of probity, Catos devoid of humanity, censors devoid of virtue.

But in order to see all these fine things is it necessary to look into the moon? Let us descend to earth, messieurs and mesdames, and pass to another picture.

THE GRISETTES

THERE are among them many who are pretty, comical, provoking, giddy, sentimental, honest and even virtuous. And why not? Molière said: "Where virtue takes up her abode." Why she necessarily must take refuge somewhere; and she is more often found in some humble room under the eaves than in sumptuous boudoirs. When virtue is one's only possession, one naturally tries to keep it.

Since people have become more enlightened and information more general, we have far fewer grisettes, in the full sense of that term, than were formerly counted in Paris. The porter's daughter goes to boarding-school; they give her masters to teach her accomplishments. She has, or thinks she has, some talent for the stage, and forthwith she enters the Conservatoire. If she has no talent and is pleasing, she will find a protector who will place her in a little home of her own. She would have been a grisette pure and simple perhaps, but now she assumes fine airs and attire and ornaments which are very unbecoming indeed.

There is nothing worse in the world than an equivocal position; have the question settled, that

those about you may know exactly how you stand. A kept woman should try to obtain a carriage and diamonds, people will blame her less if she makes her fortune; if she seeks pleasure only, let her remain a grisette; she may be less constrained in her behavior, less stiffly corseted, less pretentious in her discourse. She need not fear that she will compromise herself by going to the pit of the Gaîté, where she may give way freely to her emotions, laughing or weeping according as the tyrant is barbarous, the princess unhappy, or the simpleton funny; she can enter into conversation with her neighbor if he is pleasing, and if she likes she may allow him, during the entertainment, to snuggle very close to her, which will augment the pleasurable emotions called forth by the play. Between the acts, if she is hungry (and she will be hungry, for a grisette is always ready to take refreshments), she will go out and procure apples and cakes which she will eat during the course of the evening. Can you not imagine how thoroughly she enjoys her treat? She is at the theatre, where she makes herself quite at home; the grisette takes off her cap and her comb when they feel uncomfortable. She laughs or cries if she desires to do either; she listens to the proposal of a young man who is already ardently in love with her; he gives her little taps on the knee, which she gently repulses — or does not repulse. In fact, she goes out between the acts if it is her fancy to do so, and eats cakes as

she listens to the "Bouquetière des Champs Elysées" or trembles at the "Sonneur de Saint-Paul." Why, all this is worth more than a cashmere shawl and a toque with feathers.

Generally speaking, those who are called grisettes are work-women; a girl, however, may be a work-woman and not come under this designation. I no longer recognize as a grisette the steady, economical, working-girl, who goes straight from her shop to her mother, and who does not go out on Sundays except with her parents.

The grisette loves independence; she has her room, her own "little place"; she is virtuous so long as she has not met the handsome or pleasing young man her imagination has created; she is honest as long as she remains faithful to her lover. But she does not want him to play her any tricks, for then she will revenge herself, and once set going there is no stopping her.

Very often, in Paris, two grisettes live together. A single room suffices them, there is always space enough in it for all the furniture they possess, and they pay the rent between them; it is economical, and it is necessary for grisettes to be economical; we must not confound them with kept women.

If you have had no relations with these damsels, you have not penetrated into their dwellings, which are, however, scarcely worth being seen. A room occupied by two grisettes is a curious and interesting sight for an observer. In the first place,

order is not, generally speaking, one of their habitual qualities. Then they leave very early to go to their shop and in the evening have a good deal to think of.

Picture to yourself a small room decorated with paper at thirteen sous a roll, a great part of which is torn off or hanging from the walls; no curtain to the window, but a cord stretched across it on which hangs a petticoat or a chemise and some stockings, drying.

A couch, sometimes a bed with a sacking bottom, also devoid of curtains, a bolster, but seldom any pillows, which are luxuries; a little walnut table, of which the drawer will neither open nor shut, into which has been thrust, however, a comb, some pewter covers, a box of nightlights, some letter paper, pens, salt, pepper, some strips of embroidery, old gloves, knives, pomatum, toothache cure, a shoe brush, some corset patterns, some English blacking and some burned almonds.

Four chairs with the seats entirely out, another with a broken leg, and the other without a back. Sometimes there is a commode, but then the drawers will not lock; it is not a piece of furniture that inspires confidence. Ordinarily the two little drawers on top are full of rags and crusts of stale bread; there is a gown and two handkerchiefs in the one below; the two others are empty.

The fireplace is always the best furnished spot in the room; on the hearth are cooking utensils,

a Dutch oven, water-boiler, stewpan, tin saucepan, three or four chipped plates, all heaped together in a corner near two fire-brands which they sometimes blow into life, but which they never consume.

On the mantelpiece are the ornaments. A little mirror that shakes in its frame; two glasses which do not match, a candelabra, a flat candlestick, some matches and also a flint, and two blue drinking-glasses filled with flowers; this latter is seldom missing, for grisettes love flowers and do not stick to the rarest kinds; provided they have a stock and some mignonette they are satisfied; they thrust the bouquets into their drinking-glasses, for they must last for the whole week, and they smell good even then.

Then there are several novels and some plays lying on the chairs, the bed, or the commode; there are one or two pairs of old shoes thrown negligently here and there, an old skirt, a night-cap, a fichu, are littered at random on the furniture; some remnants of bread and cheese adorn the table and some torn curl-papers are scattered on the floor. A cat prowls about in the midst of all this, sometimes sleeping on the hearth, sometimes on the bed, playing with a book or with the piece of cheese; the cat seems to be almost the master of the house.

Don't imagine that this poorly furnished room is a gloomy place; in the morning they sing as

soon as they open their eyes. The first to awaken pokes the other so she can no longer sleep; the latter mutters and scolds, saying, "Why don't you let me sleep? what's the matter with you?"

The other passes a feather over the sleeper's lips, tickles her nose with a match, sings in her ears, pushes her, punches her, and shrieks with laughter. She absolutely has to wake up. Then they begin to tell each other all they have done the evening before.

"Ernest was very nice last night; he had on a black stock which was very becoming to him. Do you like black stocks? I am crazy about them, they give such a masculine look to a man."

"What I like are trousers with straps, they show off a horseman who is well-made. I told Polyte I wished he had some for Sundays."

"Say, the clerk at the shop opposite followed me yesterday evening and spoke to me; he insisted on taking me to dinner, to the Opéra. I don't know where he wouldn't have taken me, if I had listened to him."

"And you didn't listen to him?"

"Certainly not, my dear, I am too fond of Ernest. Goodness! my dear Ernest, how much I love you! it is delirium rather than love! And then the clerk at the shop opposite is very ugly, he squints and he dresses like a provincial. Are you like me? — I am always attracted by dress."

"I wish Polyte would take me to Franconi's

this evening. It's my favorite place of amusement — there they look so fine in their tights."

"And then the horses!"

"Oh, I don't look at the horses. Mercy! it's eight o'clock and we aren't dressed! We are going to have our dance at the shop."

"And they say there are some women fortunate enough to be able to sleep till noon if they wish, oh, when I think of such things as that! Well, I must put money in the savings bank, if I want to become rich."

"Pshaw! I'm not ambitious. I only hope my gown will be dry for Sunday. Why, I can only find one stocking and I had two here last night."

"Perhaps Moumoutte has taken it to play with."

"That horrid cat takes everything, she has swept the room with it; that's very amusing I must say. Yesterday it was my collarette, today it is my stocking. There! do you see that she has ripped holes in it with her claws."

"It's in the heel, you can stuff it into your shoe. What are we going to have for breakfast, this morning? Would you like some Italian cheese?"

"Goodness! no, I'm tired of your Italian cheese. I should like to eat some chocolate. Have you any money?"

"I have fifteen sous left."

"We can buy two little cakes for three sous at the grocer's. We can munch it with a roll; it is very good for the stomach."

"Let us hurry, it is late."

"And our bed isn't made."

"So much the worse, we shall have to leave it till night."

"And the room isn't put in order."

"It's good enough for the cat, we'll do it thoroughly on Sunday. I'll put it in order and you can scrub it."

And these damsels went off humming a refrain from the last new vaudeville at the Gymnase (the grisettes are very fond of the Gymnase); they went to their shop tripping along and laughing in the faces of the passers-by if the latter seemed comical to them. Grisettes are essentially mockers, which does not prevent them from being also compassionate and generous; they will give their breakfasts and all they have in their pockets to a poor woman who tells them she has no bread for her children, and during a whole week perhaps, instead of munching chocolate, they will breakfast on bread and water. But they will not be less cheerful, nor more conceited. What they forget quickest is the good they do.

Sunday is their gala day. In winter they must go to the theatre, in summer they dance. When they have a lover, he must necessarily take them to a ball either "intra" or "extra muros"; when they have none, they want to make conquests either to amuse themselves or to show off to their girl friends. But the greatest happiness a grisette can

experience is to make the conquest of an actor, for in the eyes of these damsels, an actor is not an ordinary man, a man like any other; he is a demi-god or rather a deity altogether, and a girl will excite the envy of her companions for a long time should she be loved by a "Jean Shogard" or "l'Homme à trois usages."

As for that, if you have known two or three grisettes, you have known them all. There is very little difference between those who frequent l'Ermitage and those who prefer the Belleville mountain; between the young working girls of the Faubourg Saint-Denis and those of the Rue Saint-Antoine. Flirting and gourmandizing are the two pivots on which they turn, attack their vanity or their appetites and you will succeed in impressing them; be well-dressed and stuff them with cakes, for they can rarely resist a young man who has kid gloves and gives them buns.

Sometimes you will inspire a very sincere affection, will be loved to the point of distraction, and you won't be able to get rid of your grisette. She will sell her effects if you are out of money; she will be willing to spend Sunday with you in her room when you cannot take her to the play. But such cases are rare; exceptions always prove the rule.

THE TWO HUSBANDS

"BLESSED are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." At each step that we take along the highway of life it is easy for us to feel the correctness of these words of Scripture. Yet, there are many incredulous people, who are, I think, extremely foolish; and those who are poor in spirit, who neither doubt the fidelity of their wives nor the devotion of their friends, are not, it seems to me, so simple as people try to make them out. And wherefore, then, should people be incredulous? Did Saint Thomas gain anything by it? And how does it serve us to have immense libraries if people wish to believe neither in prodigies, feats of strength, nor in the miracles of the good old times? If the old chronicles are for them nothing but a tissue of falsehoods; if even the histories of our first kings seem apocryphal; if they doubt the deluge and the rain of fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

According to the pyrrhonists, Xerxes did not enter Greece with five million men, he had not conquered the sea; Romulus and Remus were not suckled by a wolf; Œdipus did not kill his father, seeing that he did not rightly know who his parents

were; the Doge of Venice did not wed the Adriatic Sea by throwing his ring into its depths; Sarah was not "one hundred years old" when she made the conquest of Pharaoh of Egypt; Mutius Scævola did not, in the presence of Porsenna, hold his arm in a glowing brazier, his eye fixed proudly on the king of the Tuscans, because a man whose arm was roasting must involuntarily have made a grimace; Cæsar's ghost did not appear to the second Brutus; Constantine the Great did not perceive the "Labarum" in the air, nor did witches ever ride to their sabbaths on a broom.

I have two friends, one of whom is a pyrrhonist, always refusing to believe anything unless he is furnished with proofs, and, as a natural consequence, he is disenchanted as to the greater part of the enjoyments of life, in which one must search for proofs as little as possible.

The other, on the contrary, believes blindly in everything; he believes in Circe's root, in the herb of the fisher Glaucus, in Albert the Great's handkerchief, Solomon's ring, in the golden branch, in Fortunatus' purse, the philosopher's stone, the fountain of youth, in dreams, in cards, in Mathieu Laensberg, in Mademoiselle Lenormand; in everything, in fact, up to the news of the day.

These gentlemen were both married, each had a pretty wife; for one, the beauty was a positive fact; for the other, it was a source of pleasure. But the one enjoyed his happiness peaceably, while

the other did all he possibly could to destroy his own peace of mind. But one day this is what happened.

We were going to pass the day in the country, an excursion that had long been planned; but the evening before the wife of my friend the pyrrhonist had spasms, a sense of suffocation and low spirits.

The next day she declared herself very much indisposed, and could not possibly leave her chamber; but she did not wish her husband to deprive himself of any pleasure, and she entreated him to repair to the appointed place.

By a rather singular chance, the wife of my credulous friend had felt the same indisposition and she had also remained at home, having invited her husband to amuse himself without any uneasiness as to her health, assuring him that her indisposition would not have any serious results.

So here was I between my two married fellows, one of whom laughed and sang with never a care, while the other grumbled to himself,—

"It is very odd that our wives should both be taken ill exactly at the same time — Hum! I hardly believe in these sudden indispositions. They perhaps mask some plan."

It was understood that we should go to Meudon, but hardly were we in the coach than my pyrrhonist, impatient at our companion's good-humor, said to him,—

"Does it not seem singular to you that your wife should be taken ill on this very day that we were to go to Meudon?"

"I see nothing extraordinary in that. Why should not my wife be ill? Isn't yours ill also?"

"Yes — or so she told me! But I am not obliged to believe it."

"I should never think of doubting anything my wife told me."

Our cab was proceeding quietly along; suddenly, our incredulous friend pulled the check-string, stopped the coach, opened the door, and alighted.

"I will rejoin you at Meudon," he said to us, "I am rather uneasy about my wife's health, and I must see how she is."

He had already got to some distance, we looked at each other, my friend and I; finally my companion exclaimed,—

"What he is doing now is very wrong! to leave us thus to return to his wife, who's asleep probably, and he'll go and wake her up."

I also thought he was wrong. No man who has profited by his knowledge of life would conduct himself in such a fashion.

"He is very stupid to be so suspicious. We must revenge ourselves on him."

"I should like to very much; but how can we do it?"

"He will come to find us at Meudon, and we'll

go somewhere else; our carriage is hired for the day, and we can be driven wherever we wish. The principal thing is that this confoundedly jealous fellow should not find us."

"By Jove! that will suit me."

"Where shall we go?"

"No matter, provided that it be in a different direction."

"Well, then, let us go to Vincennes."

"Vincennes will do, let's be off."

The order was given to the cabby; he turned back, and we were off for Vincennes, laughing heartily at the figure our pyrrhonist would cut in looking for us at Meudon.

We arrived at Vincennes, we went to breakfast first of all, then we went on foot to walk about the wood.

The day was fine, the country was delightful; while we were walking through the thickly wooded paths, my good friend kept repeating,—

"I have but one regret, and it is that my wife is ill. She would have been so pleased to walk about this pretty wood with us, to run and to roll on the grass. Poor darling! We will carry her some macaroons, shall we not?"

"We will carry her anything that you like."

"Oh, I know that she likes macaroons; besides, the slightest thing gives her pleasure; she will say, 'My Bichet has thought of me.' She calls me her 'Bichet.'"

"It's as good as any other name."

We were talking in this fashion when, in turning into a path, we found ourselves face to face with a young couple who came from under the foliage. My friend uttered an exclamation of surprise, as he recognized his wife and her cousin.

The young lady seemed stunned for a moment, but she immediately pulled herself together and exclaimed,—

"Oh, here you are, messieurs! We have been looking for you for an hour, my cousin and I. I had said to my husband that I was sick, but that was that I might surprise you. You did not expect to meet me, did you?"

"By Jove, no! but how have you guessed that we were at Vincennes? We should have gone to Meudon."

"Did I not follow you with my cousin, and when your carriage turned we also turned our cabriolet; and while you were breakfasting — for you breakfasted, I wager?"

"Certainly."

"Well, it was while you were doing so that we came to await you in the wood."

"Oh, that's delightful. This is a pleasant surprise. Kiss me, wife. How nice of you to come! Now we will amuse ourselves, eh, my dear?"

"Yes, my Bichet."

"Look you, I am her Bichet."

And in fact we passed a very cheerful day; every

one was in good-humor, beginning with "Bichet," who was delighted at the surprise his wife had arranged for him. While my friend the pyrrhonist, who had found his wife in the society of a person whom he did not love, had made a shocking scene and after that day lived very uncomfortably with her.

This is, therefore, a very righteous saying — "Beati pauperes spiritu!"

WAT TYLER

An Episode in English History

It was in the year 1382. England was then enjoying profound peace and tranquillity, and, as Bruyère has so well said, "When a people is peaceful, one cannot imagine how the peace can be broken; and when it is troubled, one cannot understand how it can be restored."

But sometimes a very slight cause suffices to arouse an incendiary feeling which produces general disruption; in this case, the insolence of a tax collector produced a great popular uprising, of which Great Britain has preserved the remembrance.

King Richard II had established a new tax which affected everybody; directly a person had passed the age of adolescence and, in the eyes of the law, could be called a man or a woman, capable of earning a living, he was obliged to pay this tax. The impost probably made a portion of the direct levies.

Tyler's wife — he was a roofer on the estate of the Earl of Dartford — was at the time paying the tax for her husband and herself and her servants, for Wat was a master tyler, and lived very comfortably; but she refused to pay for her daughter,

who was hardly twelve years old, asserting that the law had no hold on her as yet and that until she was a woman she was not subject to the tax and could breathe without paying it. The collector of this tax was a wicked, brutal man, who liked to vex the unfortunate and cause tears to flow, and was always insensible to the prayers and supplications of the poor and indigent.

He was quite put out when those of whom he claimed the tax had their money all ready to give him; for then he had no cause to molest them, no threats to offer, no prayers to repulse, he was obliged to depart without seeing them shed tears and he was unsatisfied.

A certain author has said, "Each one takes his pleasure where he finds it," but there are unfortunately too many men whose pleasures are ungenerous. Tyler's wife was of a rather unaccommodating humor; she paid the collector and was showing him to the door when the latter perceived little Betsy, the tyler's daughter. This charming child was but twelve years old; but she was tall of her age, and might have been, from her looks, over fifteen years old. Picture to yourself a pretty, fair head, a pink and white complexion, blue eyes, soft and gentle in their expression, and teeth like pearls. Such was this young girl. She was an ideal of English beauty; she was one of those types which one sees and loves to dwell on when one stands before a portrait by Court or Lawrence.

He stopped, looked at Betsy, and asserted that they had not done with him as they had not paid for her.

"She is still but a child," said the mother, smiling at Betsy.

"Oh, she is quite a woman," answered the collector, and immediately with a ferocious smile he took her arm to draw her towards him. But the mother darted between the collector and her daughter and with a despairing cry said to him in a tone that came from her heart,—

"Ah, you will not offer the slightest indignity to my daughter."

Regardless of the mother's prayer, and of the tears which filled the young girl's eyes, the pitiless man again seized the child, when a hand, stronger than that of a woman, struck him and hurled him to the floor.

Tyler had been at work roofing a neighboring house, but he had heard his wife's shout and his daughter's supplications; quick as lightning he had arrived on the scene to protect them against the violence of the collector. The latter, furious at having been thrown to the ground, rose and struck at Tyler with the weapon he carried. The roofer avoided the blow and seizing one of his tools broke the collector's head.

The neighborhood soon learned of this event. The people praised Tyler's courage and swore to defend him, and to make common cause with him.

From this time on, Wat the Tyler saw the number of his defenders and partisans increase, until within a few days he found himself at the head of an army of more than a hundred thousand men who recognized him as their chief and swore death to all the tax-collectors and minions of the law; in fact, the turbulence was so great that any one who could read or write or carried a writing in his pocket was immediately roughly treated by this mob if he fell into their hands. This was carrying resentment rather far; but a man is rarely just in his moments of anger, and how can a mob of irritated men be expected to listen to reason? This is why it is dangerous to irritate the masses.

The king having been informed of these events, in the expectation that these furious men would spread sedition on their way, wanted to go to meet them himself that he might come to an understanding with Tyler. The archbishop of Canterbury turned Richard from his design, telling him that a great monarch "should not compromise with factious villains."

The rebels, on being informed of the archbishop's conduct, swore that he should be punished, and they marched on London. In vain the lord mayor endeavored to close the gates against them; Tyler led them, Tyler was invincible, and besides the people of London welcomed the rebels with confidence, for they shared their hatred of the tax and its collectors. Besides, Tyler and those around

him permitted no pillage; on the contrary, they put to death those among them whom they found guilty of the slightest infraction of their orders.

After burning the Duke of Lancaster's palace, the finest building in London, Tyler, fearing that it might be suspected that their object was pillage, published it abroad that he had forbidden, under penalty of death, any one to appropriate the slightest thing taken from the palace and that the immense quantity of silver found there would be broken and thrown into the Thames.

The rebels would have destroyed the Tower of London also had not the king agreed to meet them in person and listen to their propositions; but when this prince appeared, the door of the Tower had been opened and Tyler and his people entered, mingled with guards and the king's suite.

The garrison of this fortress consisted of not more than a dozen men, and was composed of men-at-arms and archers; they dared undertake nothing against Tyler's troops, who came and went freely everywhere; but these rebels, who up to this time had kept themselves in leash; these men who in presenting themselves as redressers of wrongs, as vengers of tyranny, should have guarded against becoming tyrants themselves, soon lost all restraint and were guilty of the greatest excesses. Thus is it true that in revolutions passion mingles with politics, and what began in zeal for one's country ends in zeal for one's self.

The archbishop of Canterbury was discovered in a remote chapel at his prayers; the rebels led him to the platform of the Tower and there put him to death. The grand treasurer and the king's confessor submitted to the same fate.

Tyler's army extended their cruelties to foreigners and to all the Flemish; and in order to assure himself that they were Flemish, Tyler made those he suspected of being so pronounce two words in English which had a great resemblance to two Flemish words. They had the same meaning but a rather different sound, which made it extremely difficult for the Flemish to pronounce them exactly like the English. These two words in English were "bread" and "cheese," and in Flemish, "brod" and "kase." If they were not pronounced according to the rebels' ideas, Tyler tore off the cap of the man who was speaking and he was turned over to the executioners.

Certainly, bread and cheese here played an ugly part and one for which it was not intended.

However, the king had had some interviews with the rebels and had in vain begged them to lay down their arms; Tyler refused to do so and insisted on several points to which Richard could not agree. The roofer wanted the king to give him license to kill all the tax-collectors. He had even sworn that there should be no more of them in England than the ones already established. Wat Tyler had become a despot in his turn. Finally

another interview was accorded by the king to the chief of the rebels. The latter had established themselves in a vast plain, where Tyler's whole army was gathered.

The roofer was on horseback when he advanced towards the king, and he drew so near that prince that his horse's head brushed that of Richard's richly caparisoned steed.

"Sire," said Tyler, "do you see all those people down there," and the roofer pointed to his army, which lay at a little distance.

"Yes, of course," said Richard, "I see your friends who are also my subjects—what is your object? What do you want?"

"All these people are at my orders, they have sworn to be devoted to me till death, and to do all that I command them."

Richard made no answer, but his face expressed not the slightest emotion, he listened calmly to Tyler, who resumed,—

"I declare, sire, that we will not disband until you have given us the charters we demand."

The king was about to make Tyler understand that he was willing to render justice to all his subjects, when Tyler took offence that Sir John Newton, who carried the king's sword, was on horseback in his monarch's presence; he called him traitor, and threatened him with his poniard. The knight immediately drew his own weapon and was preparing to use it when the king stopped him and

ordered him to dismount and to give his poniard to Tyler. The roofer was not satisfied with this mark of condescension, he wanted also to have the sword which Sir John was carrying, and he dared to put his hand on it.

"This is the king's sword," exclaimed Sir John Newton, "you are not worthy to touch it; and if we were alone you would not dare to renew your demand."

"I should not dare," said Tyler, furiously, "I dare much further than that, for I swear before your king and master not to eat until I have cut off your head."

As he said these words, the roofer prepared to cast himself on the knight, when he saw the lord mayor of London come up, followed by a great number of gentlemen and squires, who, alarmed at the position of the monarch, came to take him away by main force.

"Sire," cried the lord mayor, "it will be as shameful as unprecedented to allow so valiant a knight to be assassinated in his lord's presence. Permit me to punish this insolent rebel."

The king signed to the lord mayor to arrest the guilty man, but before they had time to reach him Tyler had plunged his poniard into Sir John Newton's breast; but almost at the same moment the lord mayor's mace-bearer struck him on the head and the chief of the rebels fell from his horse dead, at the feet of his victim.

The multitudinous army of the roofer rent the air with their shouts. Richard, seeing them ready to launch a flight of arrows at his troops, put his horse at a gallop and suddenly presen ted himself to the rebels, saying to them,—

"What are you going to do, my friends? will you kill your king to avenge the death of a man who dishonored himself by a cowardly assassination? Do better, take me for your chief, and I promise to grant you everything that caused you to take arms."

Struck by the noble hardihood of this young prince (Richard was then only eighteen) and disarmed by his promises, the rebels instantly obeyed him and returned to their provinces.

What will perhaps appear surprising is the fact that the monarch kept his word, and rejected with a kind of indignation the advice given him by his courtiers to have some of the rebels, at least, put to death to frighten those who might be tempted to imitate them.

Thus died Wat the Tyler, whose political career was short. He began by an act of justice and ended by himself committing an act of cowardly tyranny. A moment's power sufficed him to do that which he had blamed in others!

A LITTLE INNOCENT GAME

Le Pied de Bœuf

"They are just beginning a game of boston in the drawing-room, and that will last for a century," said pretty Adeline to her companions; "Madame de Bermont is going to play, and you know what a time she is reflecting on every move she makes. We have a couple of hours before us, let us do something. Let us play some little games."

The little games are accepted; the young girls sit down and draw nearer together; the young men ask permission to join in the innocent games and it is accorded them; they form a ring, but some one is missing, a big, fair girl who is chatting with an old gentleman in a corner of the drawing-room.

"Come along, Clarisse," the damsels call to her.

"No, I thank you, I don't care to play," answers Mademoiselle Clarisse rather formally. Immediately all the young girls look from one to the other and smile mischievously.

"How ridiculous she is!"

"Why, what a silly idea; mademoiselle does not wish to play little games this evening."

"Why, no, don't you see that she is talking literature, poetry with that old gentleman? She's

playing the savant. I am sure he is paying her compliments. She is delighted. See what an air of importance she is putting on, how she is compressing her lips."

"She talk of literature! it must be comical to hear her — she knows nothing at all about it. Just imagine, the other day she wanted to insist to me that the 'Solitaire' was by Lord Byron."

"That was delicious!"

"Since her father has gone up a grade in his office, she gives herself airs. Oh, it is too funny!"

"She wants to learn geometry."

"She had much better practise on her piano, on which she plays execrably."

"And what a squeaky voice she has."

"When she sings any one would think she was howling."

"But come now, Clarisse; do please come, dearest!" resumed the damsel who spoke last.

"No, mesdemoiselles, I cannot; mamma is putting on her shawl. We must go to bed early, for tomorrow we are going to the country house of papa's chief of division."

All the young girls look at each other again, and bite their lips so as not to laugh. At last they remember they are going to play some little games. After long deliberation it is agreed that they shall play pied de bœuf, because that will not disturb anything. They need only draw close together, and then there are certain young men who will not

object to placing their hands on those of certain young ladies. Sensitive hearts take advantage of everything.

The hands are placed one on the other.

"Come now, monsieur," say they to a young man, whose hand is the last in the pile, and who will not withdraw it because he is so pleased to rest it on the knee of one of Clarisse's friends. "It's your turn to count! What are you thinking of?"

"Excuse me, I had forgotten how to play it."

They count,— seven — eight —

"Nine!" says a little girl of twelve, and the poor little thing thinks she is going to snatch something, but she holds nothing, and she is very disappointed. They begin again; a pretty dark girl finds herself the last and when she says, "Nine," the young man's hand withdraws so slowly that she has no trouble in seizing it. It is so sweet to be caught by a pretty woman.

"I keep my pied de bœuf," says she with a triumphant air.

"Really! that is quite wrong," says the twelve-year-old girl; "monsieur was not so nice to me."

Patience, sweet child, you promise to be charming; in three or four more years you will be as fortunate as any of them at little innocent games.

THE HUSBANDS

Beaumarchais has somewhere remarked, "Of all serious things, marriage is the most comical."

But Beaumarchais, who wished to pass for a wit, often advanced paradoxical ideas which he could support only by witticisms.

No, marriage is not a comical thing; far from it! Nor is the state of the married man always as comfortable as might be imagined. It is not enough for him that he finds his slippers and loving attentions at his own fireside. And then, does he always find these attentions? Some husbands must have a great many things to make them happy, and others require so few! But these few are often as difficult to find as the many.

However, everybody gets married; those who are not yet so, will be — married, that goes without saying — and God forbid that we should have the slightest intention of penning a diatribe against marriage in these pages.

Since the majority wish to taste the happiness of married life, it is probable, in spite of all the pleasantries launched against marriage that the advantages outweigh the disagreeables.

And, then, where should we be if there were no

marriages. Were we not placed upon the earth to live together? Are we not here, before all things, to love?

> Love is essential, doth sustain the mind;
> Without it, life were sad to humankind!
> And, having love, night is essential too,
> In which to voice our feelings deep and true,
> To the dear beings whom our hearts adore.
> We re-awaken to recount once more
> The tale that can't be told too oft, it seems;
> For when we sleep, it mingles in our dreams!

It is Voltaire who says that, and I am altogether of Voltaire's opinion. Then, since night is always with us, it is indispensable that one should have near him the tender being whom his heart adores.

Besides, this is also according to the teaching of the apostles. So it is quite understood that it is perfectly right to marry. But then, my married men, why have you sometimes such a very peculiar manner? Why do you so often deny your position, as you do in assuming the carriage, the flirtatious glances and all the manners of a bachelor? Why, when you have only just married, do you complain of being so? (married, of course, I mean!)

Why do you so soon cease to be lovers? to be gallant? to be thoughtful and impressive in your attentions? to be amiable? and often even to be loving? For all these things you cease to do, or at any rate cease to do them so perfectly as you did before your marriage.

Why, instead of avoiding quarrels by means of a little patience or a desire to be obliging, do you habituate yourself to disputing with your wife as perfunctorily as you take your coffee?

Why, when discontent seems to be about to slip into your household, do you so quickly go to seek your pleasure elsewhere, in place of making an effort to bring it into your home? Why are you the first to do everything that is necessary to cause your wife to cease to love you? Why are you simple enough to intimately associate with handsome bachelors or men of wit, with whom you cannot compare favorably?

Why are you foolish enough to give it about everywhere that your wife has ceased to love you? It is as though you said, "The place is vacant, I occupy it no longer; anyone who likes can take it."

Why! Why! I wager you have already said, "We don't do anything of the kind!" Oh, you don't do anything of the kind! You are quite sure! — but no one knows himself.

Would you like to know what you do? Be assured, I shall not overdraw my pictures, I shall first depict the "Newly Married Man"; or if you like it better, "The Honeymoon."

In the first place, the newly married man gets up very late; he cannot tear himself from bed (of course his wife does not get up either). If he is a clerk, he says,—

"By Jove! I shall get to my office too late to

sign the time card at the porter's, I would just as soon not go at all."

If he is in trade, he says,—

"The clerks are downstairs, they do not need me to open the shop. We don't sell much of anything in the morning; besides, it's quite necessary that those young men should learn to depend on themselves, I can't be incessantly watching them."

If he is in business, he says,—

"I had an appointment for this morning. I will go this evening; that will come to the same thing. After all, one can't kill one's self."

If he does nothing, but lives on his income, then he says nothing; but when his wife asks him the time, he stops her with a kiss, and answers,—

"What does it matter to us? There's nothing to hurry us. Can't we do as we please!"

Madame allows herself to be easily convinced; she thinks her husband is endowed with very persuasive eloquence, and congratulates herself on having wedded a Mirabeau.

However, love does not suffice to sustain our frail machine, and presently our married man confesses that he is very hungry; his wife says,—

"Breakfast must be waiting for us, let us get up."

"Why should we get up?" cries our husband. "Let us breakfast in bed; that will be nicer."

Madame has no objections to offer to this arrangement; she smiles at her husband, whose ideas are always very luxurious.

They breakfast in bed. It may be very nice to do so, but certainly it isn't at all convenient. But no matter, love makes everything charming.

After breakfast they have so many things to say to each other that they still linger. At length they rise. It is almost dinner time, and they have done nothing but laugh and fool and frolic, and both think the day has passed very quickly.

Monsieur cannot refrain from looking into madame's eyes, from putting his arm around her waist, from pressing her hands; when he is not doing some one of these things, he sighs and sulks, until madame fears that it will go too far, and that her husband will presently lose his wits for love of her.

At dinner monsieur takes madame on his knee; he drinks from the glass from which she has drunk; he eats of everything she has tasted. Indian curry seems insipid to him if she has not touched it.

In the evening the new-married couple decide to go to the play, but they cannot stay there to the close; if they go to a party, monsieur is in great haste to get back home. He signals his wife from afar, and she makes him understand that for appearances' sake they must not go yet.

But our newly married man cares not a fig for appearances; it little matters to him what people say, or what they think. He wants to get his wife away; he wants to find himself alone with her, for it seems to him that such moments are rare.

At length he succeeds in inducing her to leave; so eager is he that it is almost an elopement. He puts her into a carriage and springs in after her, impatiently thinking they will never reach home.

If this could last forever, how delightful it would be! But — the honeymoon wanes.

Would women always be to their husbands what they are in the honeymoon? That is a grave question, and I shall not seek a solution for it here, because it is the married men with whom we are occupied, and not with their better halves. I will only say, in passing, that the women yield less quickly than do we to the fullest emotions of pleasure and happiness; consequently, it is not the wife who begins to change the honeymoon into the declining moon.

Monsieur, who was so fond of lying in bed, begins to get up earlier; then he rises as early as he did before he married; and at last, he gets up much earlier than when he was a bachelor.

It is now madame who wishes to detain him, but he disengages himself from her restraining arms, as he says,—

"And how about the office. Devil take it! I don't want them to make unfavorable reports to my chief—and lose my place later on." Or else,—

"I have an appointment this morning, very early; it's a very important matter, and I don't want to miss my man. When one is eager to do good business, one can't be idle."

"But you haven't breakfasted," madame will say sometimes, sighing; "if you like, they can bring your breakfast up to you in bed. That won't take long."

"Oh, no! What an idea! to breakfast in bed! It's so comfortable, is that! You upset your coffee, drop your spoon, lose your bread — it's wretched to breakfast in bed. It's like those people who prefer to dine on the grass and crick their backs every time they pour out anything to drink. A table, my dear, a table well laid, is absolutely necessary for one to eat with comfort."

Madame murmurs, half pouting and half annoyed,—

"A short time back, however, nothing would suit you but to breakfast in bed with me; you did not find it inconvenient then."

Monsieur's only answer is to jump out of bed; he hastily dresses, hurriedly despatches his breakfast, and goes out before his wife has finished her morning toilet.

Madame does not think her husband so eloquent as she formerly did. She makes the same reflections as did Gil Blas with the Archbishop of Granada.

When monsieur comes in during the day, if his wife approaches him and wants to play little tricks, to laugh and sport, as during the first days of their marriage, our married man answers brusquely,—

"Let me be quiet, my dearest, I have no time

to play. You are a darling! but, if you want to oblige me, don't prevent me from working."

Nor does monsieur ever dream of putting his arm round madame's waist, nor of gazing contemplatively into her eyes for minutes at a time. At dinner he no longer takes her on his knees. And when his wife offers him a morsel, from which she has bitten, he does not seem to see it and continues to eat what he has; or else he shrugs his shoulders and answers,—

"Have done with your foolishness! I do not like that piece; besides, it is too fat"—or "too thin," as the case may be.

When madame puts on a new bonnet, and comes to show herself in it to her husband, inquiring, "What do you think of me? Is it becoming?" our husband answers, "Very nice, very nice indeed; you look charming." But he barely glances at his wife, and the latter, who perceives that her husband has not looked at her, departs very much vexed by this indifference, and makes up her mind not to try to please his taste in future.

When monsieur takes madame to a party, he deposits her in a corner of the drawing-room, where she may amuse herself as best she can.

For his part, he has done his duty, the rest is no affair of his; he goes into another room and makes himself as amiable and polite as possible to another woman — perhaps to a good many other women; the essential thing to him is, that it be

not his wife; if he dances, he never does so with her; it is understood that it is bad form to dance with one's wife.

Later on he seats himself at a card-table, and there he quite forgets the time. He is enjoying himself, and it does not occur to him that his wife may be tired. The latter, however, comes to the card-room and approaches her husband.

"My dear," she says to him sweetly, "shall we not be thinking of going."

"Yes, yes — in a minute — very soon now. Go and dance a bit — and then we'll go."

"I don't wish to dance any more; I am tired."

"Well, sit down and rest, then."

Madame says no more, she goes away; but she comes back at the end of half an hour, to say to her husband who is still playing,—

"My dear, it is quite late. Are you coming?"

"Yes, yes, — in five minutes; in less than five minutes, I'll be with you."

The five minutes lengthen into another half hour; finally, our married man leaves the card-table, saying,—

"How tiresome not to be able to do as one likes without incessantly having some one after him — who obliges him to leave when he wishes to stay; women have not the slightest consideration. Ah, when I was a bachelor, I did as I liked. Idiot that I was, to tie myself up like this! Come along!"

Monsieur takes madame's arm and conducts her

on foot; and when she says to him, "Are we not going to take a cab?" he answers, "Why should we? it is not far; besides, it will do us good to walk a little."

Madame sighs again, she thinks that her husband is quite changed, that he is no longer a Mirabeau. In fact, he is changed. But can the follies that signalize the honeymoon be expected to last? No, of course not.

But why commit these follies? Why, gentlemen, when you set up your own households, accustom your wives to a way of living which it will be difficult, nay, impossible for you to keep up? Why saturate them with pleasure, to put them on half rations later on? Why overwhelm them with caresses, and then not even raise your eyes when they are trying on new bonnets for your benefit? Why expend all your amiability in the first few days, and never have a gallant word to say thereafter. Why? Because it is not in man's nature to know how to be moderate.

And all that I can say will not change the conduct of a married man during the first days of his marriage.

We will now pass to the man who acts as nurse for his children, for when people marry they have children, which is all very right and proper. The Scriptures say: "Increase and multiply," and, in truth, when you marry you do not increase, but you do multiply.

But we are now talking of the married man who has children, and who worships them; who is devoted to them, body and soul; who bends in ecstasy over their cradles; who gives them pap, after tasting it himself; who gets up in the night to give them drink, and who takes them out walking on the boulevards or elsewhere.

Let us also walk on the boulevards, and we shall soon meet a married man who acts as his children's nurse. It is impossible not to recognize at a first glance this type of paternal love,— the father who has abdicated all the other rights of a man to consecrate himself entirely to his little ones.

Take note of this gentleman in respectable bourgeoise clothes; although his attire is unpretentious to a degree, he would be extremely neat had not his children the habit of wiping their hands on his coat, his trousers, in fact, on whatever part of his apparel comes handiest to them; so that it nearly always bears traces of sweetmeats, butter, honey, jam, or molasses. As you may imagine, it is difficult for him to preserve the appearance of being neat and well-cared for.

Often, this gentleman also has some portion of his raiment torn, he usually lacks several buttons, and his hat nearly always bears marks of having been repaired — all of which is the result of the artless abandon of his babes; though it does not prevent his eternally singing,—

"Ah, what joy to be a father."

This gentleman has two sons, and their mamma is expecting an addition to her nursery. The elder is six years old, and the younger is in his fourth year. The worthy man is a victim to the clamorous desires of his two little boys from the time he wakes up until he goes to bed. Madame insists that no one must oppose Dodolphe and Polyte in anything; she asserts that, in order to form the characters of the children, they must be allowed to follow their own wills.

Monsieur is too good a father to gainsay madame, and instead of making his brats obey, it is he who is incessantly at the orders of the two imps. When Dodolphe and Polyte wish to go out walking, our man hurriedly dons his frock-coat, puts on his hat and starts off with his sons. Madame shouts to him from the top of the stairs,—

"Be careful about the carriages, and don't let them walk too fast; don't let them walk in the mud. If they tear their clothes, you'll have to answer for it," with all the other warnings one gives to a nursemaid; to which monsieur replies with a submissive expression,—

"All right, my dear, I won't leave them for one moment, I shall take good care of them, don't be uneasy."

Monsieur directs his steps towards the boulevards, holding Polyte with one hand and Dodolphe with the other. The walk begins peaceably enough; the children, satisfied with being out of doors, are

contented to look about them and to force their father to stop in front of every shop, which the latter does with admirable self-abnegation. But when they reach the Boulevard du Temple, Dodolphe emphasizes his wish to go to the right, to see the waxworks; Polyte evinces a keen desire to turn to the left, to see the Château d'Eau.

Feeling himself drawn two ways, our masculine nursemaid is very much distressed; for the first time he cannot please both his sons at one and the same time, but he does what he can to make them agree by saying to them,—

"My dears, we can't go two ways at the same time; if it could be done, I should be glad to do it; you know very well I never deny you anything."

"I want to see the waxworks," says the biggest.

"I want to go to the château, dodo, dodo na!" shrieks the youngest, stamping his feet with rage like a grown person, to the admiration of his father.

"No, we'll go that way; shan't we, papa?"

"No, this way, pa-pa dear."

The two brats begin again to drag the author of their being, each one attaching himself to a tail of the paternal frock-coat. Our man is ready to cry; but at length he perceives that if he does not put them in order, he will presently be reduced to a waistcoat; he plucks up courage, and speaking in a gruff voice, he shouts,—

"By Jove, messieurs, if you don't make an end

of this, I shall go off and leave you both here, bless me! and the policeman will come and take you, bless me! and arrest you like the bad people —yes, indeed, and a good thing too."

This threat has some effect; the children are, for a few moments, reduced to silence.

Delighted at having managed to make himself obeyed, our man leads them with a certain kind of pride, looking around him to enjoy the effect that he must have produced upon the passers-by.

They go and look at the wax figures, but that does not satisfy the two little boys, who want to go in to see the show; the papa consents, although it is the fifteenth time the worthy man has seen the waxworks and heard the explanations of the scenes. Prizes of virtue have been accorded to many people who would not have the strength to submit to that test.

After contemplating these chaste figures, the infants are athirst. Papa takes them into a café and asks for some beer. They bring it; the two little boys taste it, make grimaces, and eject it in a rather unconventional manner from their mouths.

"How nasty that is — it isn't sweet a bit," they remark.

Papa orders some lemonade or some sugared water, which he gives to his children, and, although he is not thirsty, himself swallows the whole of the bottle of beer, in order that it may not be wasted; paternal love renders one capable of anything.

When they come out of the café the children are eager to see Punch and Judy, they stop before a canvas tent. This time they do not ask to go inside; they know already that what goes on at the door is the most amusing. But as they are behind some soldiers, nurses, and idlers of all kinds, in jackets, in blouses and even coats, who also come to look at Punch, they begin to shout,—

"Papa, carry me — take me up in your arms."

Our man stoops, puts an arm round each of the cherubs and lifts them as high as his shoulders. Paternity is not all roses.

So this dear gentleman whose sight is obscured by his youngsters' velveteens is, for all that, obliged to explain the spectacle, and to answer the questions which the latter incessantly address to him.

"Papa, who is that ugly man there, the one who shakes his head and wants to beat Punch?"

"That's the magistrate, my dear."

"Why, he has two big horns on his head, and a red tail."

"If he has a red tail, it can't be the magistrate — it is the devil, my boys."

"Papa, why does the devil want to beat Punch?"

"My dear, it is probably because Punch hasn't been good, he has perhaps refused to eat his soup, or he did not want to learn the fable of the fox and the crow."

"Does the devil teach Punch his fables, then, papa? is he his schoolmaster?"

"Papa, carry me — take me up in your arms."

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

The papa, dumfounded at the profundity of this reflection on the part of Dodolphe, who is but six years old, glances at the faces of the persons around him to see if they reflect the admiration which he feels for his son at this moment; but, perceiving that no one is taking any notice of him, our man decides on answering in a loud tone so as to attract the attention of the crowd.

"My dear Dolphe, the devil is not a schoolmaster; it would certainly be erroneous to attribute those functions to him — those functions especially as — those functions — "

Here the papa, at a loss what to say next, begins to cough as if he had swallowed a fish bone, after which he resumes,—

"But at all epochs he interferes — is interfering, to punish little rascals who are not good. This was what I wanted to make you understand just now in employing a metaphorical figure — hum — hum!"

"Papa, who's this man in a long black gown, with flour on his hair, who comes in as the devil goes out and who is disputing with Punch?"

"Oh, this time it is the magistrate."

"What is a magistrate, papa?"

"Why, he is a man who is appointed to see that peace and order are kept, my dear."

"Then, why is he disputing with Punch and beating him with a stick?"

A new access of admiration on the part of papa,

who fondly imagines he is carrying an embryo Voltaire on his shoulders.

"Why, my boy, it is probably because Punch has refused to pay his taxes, or has put flower-pots on his window-sills, contrary to the orders of the police."

"Oh, oh, the magistrate has killed Punch—"

"That is a proof of divine justice, my child, which decrees that sooner or later those who do wrong shall receive punishment for their misdeeds."

"Oh, no; Punch gets up again, he has killed the magistrate."

"Probably the magistrate had two weights and two measures, and Providence willed that he should be punished by means of Punch."

"Papa, papa! the magistrate is not dead—he's taking his stick again; there, he's killed Punch!"

"Then Punch is decidedly the miscreant; he has perhaps assaulted a policeman."

"Papa, papa, Punch is not dead—he's got the stick again now, and is killing the magistrate. Oh, how he is thwacking him."

Papa begins to find it difficult to explain to his infants the moral of the play enacted by the marionettes; but at this moment he is taken with sneezing, which extracts him from one dilemma and plunges him into another; for in sneezing one's primary need is to use one's pocket-handkerchief for the purpose for which it is intended, particularly is this the case when the individual is addicted to

the use of snuff. Our man, having sneezed, would have given the whole world to be able to get at his handkerchief; but how can he put his hand in his pocket with a child on each arm?

The parent of Adolphe and Hippolyte decides to omit the ceremony with the handkerchief, as the only possible course in his present circumstances.

Soon a dispute arises on the shoulders of the married man, Messieurs Dodolphe and Polyte both snatch at a stick of barley sugar; shouts and slaps are the outcome of the dispute. Vainly does the papa utter these words,—

"Well, messieurs, will you have done up there? Do you think I am holding you up to fight in the air?"

"He took my sucker."

"He's a greedy thing."

"And he wanted to eat it all."

"Don't believe him, papa; I broke the piece in two, and gave him half."

"Papa, he kept the longest bit."

"That isn't true — he says that because he has gobbled up half his already."

To put an end to the quarrel, our man adopts the wise course of placing his two sons on the ground.

Then the latter howl louder than before, and want to see Punch again, who is fighting now with the cat, which has replaced the magistrate and the devil.

to drink.

Monsieur Dodolph
always remain quietly
turn leaves the author
at an image or watch
Sometimes, little Polyt
as his brother. Then
peck of trouble; obliged
sters, who have scampe
he bumps into and jostl
abuse from some, digs w
but he pays no attentio
if, after putting himself
manages to catch both
along with him.

Presently he notices th
nose grazed and one of
although usually they are
the younger, has lost quit
of his jacket, and that his
knee.

"What does this mean
father. "I haven't

"Papa, a big boy who was playing marbles punched me in the eye, because he said I had walked on his game and prevented him from winning."

"Papa, there was an old woman with a dog; and I wanted to pet him, and he jumped on me and tore a piece out of my jacket, and I ran away from him and fell down and tore my trousers."

"Well, this is nice! we shall have a pleasant reception! What will your mother say to me? You little devils, I can never take you back fit to be seen."

"Papa, carry us."

"Papa, carry me!"

"Confound it! no! The idea! you are going to walk now, my fine fellows; I carried you long enough in front of the Punch and Judy show. Besides, you must not ask me to bring you out walking if you continually ask me to carry you."

"Papa, are we very far from home?"

"No, only about three hundred metres."

"What does that mean, papa?"

"What does that mean? why, it is a Greek word, my boys, and when you learn Greek you will know it as well as papa and mamma."

"I'm so tired, oh, dear me!"

"My feet hurt me."

"Come, Polyte, come, Dodolphe, show that you are little men, don't be babies."

"Then sing us a song."

"Oh, yes, papa. You promised to teach us Marlborough."

"Well, so I will sing the song of Marlborough, but you must repeat it after me. Pay strict attention now, and presently you shall sing it for mamma, and it will please her."

"Yes, papa."

"Yes, dear papa."

Papa sings in a solemn tone, trying to walk in time, and adopting the pronunciation required by the lament.

"'Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre — miroton, toton, mirotaine,' now, messieurs."

Monsieur Dodolphe shouts it at the top of his voice; and little Polyte drones between his teeth — "Toton — toton, tontaine — toton."

Papa continues to drone, "Ne sais quand reviendra — ne sais quand reviendra!' Now, boys!"

"Oh, my stomach aches!"

"I'm thirsty — I am."

"No, you are not thirsty now; you've had too many things already. Come, stoutly now, 'Ne sais quand reviendra — '"

"'Ne sais quand' — oh, papa, I want some almond cake!"

"Be quiet, you little glutton. Come along, Polyte."

Little Polyte made a grimace, put his hand on his little stomach, and confined himself to murmuring,—

"'Miroton, mirotaine — toton'— I've got a pain in my stomach!—'Mirotaine, toton.'"

Presently the two children refuse to walk, and their wretched parent for a moment gives himself up to despair; then he convulsively grabs his two brats and sets off again, exclaiming,—

"By jingo! what a walk! oh, you little rascals!"

"Papa," grumbles Dodolphe, "you're not singing — sing Marlborough for us."

"Give me some peace, you little scoundrels!"

"Oh, papa, you didn't say, 'Miroton, mirotaine.' Naughty, bad papa! I'm going to cry if you don't sing."

"Good-for-nothing boy — there — there, don't cry. You'll wear me all out, but all right! 'Il reviendra-z-á Pâques — miroton, mirotaine — il reviendra-z-á Pâques, ou á la Trinité."

At last the wretched man gets home and there he is scolded roundly by his wife for having permitted the children to tear their clothes and get hurt.

It is quite natural to love one's children, nor is there the slightest harm in taking them to walk; but when a married man takes upon himself the precise duties of a nursemaid, he becomes ridiculous even in his wife's eyes, and that is very dangerous. A woman, as a general thing, only keeps her love for her husband so long as she fancies him superior to herself, and the ridiculous kills all idea of superiority.

Then there is the husband who takes his wife out walking.

It is three o'clock,—they should have gone out at one; but monsieur did not know if he should or should not shave, if he should wear a coat or a frock-coat, if he should put on a waistcoat with a rolling collar or a plain one—all this had taken until three o'clock.

Then monsieur is ready; he goes down first, swaggering, looking at himself, highly pleased with his get-up.

Madame not reaching the foot of the staircase as soon as he, monsieur turns, stamps his foot impatiently, and calls up to her,—

"Well, are we never going to get out today?"

"Here I am, I was looking for my gloves."

"That's all very well; first it's gloves, then it's a handkerchief. I should have been quite surprised if, at the last moment, you had not forgotten something."

Madame comes at last and takes monsieur's arm, still putting on her gloves. The gentleman says in a low tone,—

"Queer manners to put on one's gloves in the street."

"My dear, you hurried me so."

"What, I hurried you? why, you wanted to go out two hours ago, and kept grumbling because I was not dressed. A pretty thing to say I hurried you! Which way shall we go?"

"It is all the same to me."

"And to me also."

"I will go wherever you like."

"We must decide, however, and not stand here in the middle of the street like a couple of idiots. I don't know of anything more annoying than a woman who always answers, 'It is all the same to me!'"

"Oh, well, my dear, let us go to the Tuileries."

So they set off walking. Monsieur looks at the ladies as they pass or thinks about his business. They do not speak a word. Sometimes, in passing a milliner's or draper's shop, madame exclaims,—

"Oh, what a pretty shawl! What a sweet pattern for a dress! What a love of a bonnet!"

Monsieur does not hear, or he makes a pretence of not hearing; or, as his only answer, he makes a little mumbling sound such as, "Hum—um—um—um—yes"; but he is very careful not to stop in front of the shops.

They reach the Tuileries. They walk about here and there, up and down, and do not exchange a word; only monsieur yawns from time to time, or breathes as though he were suffocating.

In the middle of a path where there is not a single person, monsieur suddenly exclaims,—

"Well, I must say it is amusing to walk about here!"

"Well, why not go somewhere else?"

"Why, there was no need of coming to the Tuileries."

"But, then, you wouldn't say where you wanted to go."

"That's always the way; you chose this place because you know that there is no walk that I dislike more."

"Oh, directly you go out with me, you are bored; whether it is this neighborhood or any other, it is all the same thing."

"Come, that's right — more reproaches; it's always the same way. But do you really think it agreeable to walk about in the midst of this crowd, of these children who are always rolling their hoops or balls against one's legs? and to swallow all this dust — does this amuse you?"

"If you were to speak to me, I shouldn't mind it; but you never have a word to say to me."

"My dearest, when people are incessantly together, they can't always find subjects of conversation."

"If you were with another woman, you would be as amiable, as pleasing as possible."

"She would not say bitter, sharp things to me, she would not incessantly jaw at me."

"If one only reproaches one's husband with looking as if he were bored, one is 'jawing' him!"

"Will you have done?"

"You think you can prevent me from speaking now, do you?"

"Shout a little louder, so as to make everybody who passes look at us — that will be the last straw."

"I shall shout if I wish. Do you suppose people are noticing us? you always think everybody is looking at you."

"If you keep on, I shall let go of your arm."

"Let go of it — it is all the same to me."

Monsieur half stops, but he thinks better of it and does not leave madame's arm, and they finish their walk without breathing another word.

Then there is the husband who is always paying his wife little attentions.

You will recognize him immediately; when they are out walking he gives his hand to the child, if there is one with them; he regulates his steps by those of his wife, he swings and twists himself almost as she does; he holds the umbrella, he holds the bag, when madame has one; and he looks at her every two minutes anxiously and even lovingly, as he says, softly,—

"Tell me when you are tired, darling! or if you want to turn back, my angel.— Would you like to have a cab, love? — Shall we cross over? — Darling, I'm afraid you'll have the sun in your eyes.— Take care! there is a gutter.— We will go slower if you like."

And a great many other little phrases of this kind, which usually obtain no answer except an impatient movement or a very perceptible shrugging of the shoulders.

When this gentleman takes his wife to the play, he makes her try five or six places before he allows her to fix on one.

"My dear, you won't be comfortable here, there are several big bonnets in front of you; let us go over there, you will see better.— The seat is hard here, let us go to the other side.— I don't want you to stay here, there's a draught from the back; you will take a fresh cold, it is very dangerous. Let us go elsewhere.— Oh, there's a lady near us who exhales a detestable odor of musk, it will give you a nervous attack; I can't let you stay there."

The poor woman, tired of thus peregrinating about the theatre, at last clings to one place and refuses to stir from it.

"This is comfortable enough," she says, "I shall stay here, I'm tired of changing from place to place."

"It was for your comfort that I did it. Do you want a footstool?"

"No—"

"Boxkeeper, bring a footstool for madame. Would you like a cushion under you?"

"What should I want that for? Am I a child?"

"Boxkeeper, try to get a cushion for my wife. Would you like me to close the window of the box?"

"Just as you like."

"Are you too warm?"

"No."

"I will close it."

The play begins; madame would very much like to listen to the actors, but in the midst of an interesting scene, her husband says to her,—

"You look pale; you're not ill, are you?"

"Me! not at all."

"Do you feel a pain somewhere?"

"Why, good heavens! no; I have no pain anywhere. What an idea! to want me to be sick."

"I don't want it, sweetheart, quite the contrary; but if you are at all unwell it would be much better to tell me, and we will go; you may be staying out of consideration for me and that would be wrong."

"What I should like, and what would give me very great pleasure, would be for you to let me hear the play."

"I'm not preventing you from listening to the play, it seems to me. But, all the same, it troubles me to see you so pale as this."

When this gentleman dines in the city with his wife, he never loses sight of her; and, even if he be at the other end of the table, he will not fail to call to her,—

"Don't eat that, darling, that won't do you any good — you know that anchovies don't agree with you.— Don't take any lobster, it is too indigestible for you.— If you take any salmon, you'll do very wrong."

"Monsieur, I beg of you, don't pour out any madeira for my wife, for it will make her ill; I know

exactly what her digestion will stand. My dearest, if you drink it, you will make trouble for me."

Madame, altogether impatient at the care her husband takes of her health, makes a very pronounced grimace and eats nothing at all, because the vexation she experiences has taken away her appetite.

Meantime, monsieur eats for four, and drinks of all the wines.

Do they go to a ball, that is another story; first of all, monsieur inspects madame's toilet.

"That gown is cut too low, you will take cold; it is too tight, too, it must make you uncomfortable."

"I assure you, my dear, that my gown does not incommode me in the least."

"Oh, women will never confess that any article of dress is too tight; but they often do themselves immense injury by compressing their waists, which sometimes results in serious illnesses. People very often say, 'So-and-so has just died of consumption; it is very singular, for she was so well-built, had such a fresh complexion, one would never have thought she would go into consumption.' But no one ever imagines that, to make her waist small, this lady had compressed her body and injured her lungs."

"My dear, look here, I can pass my finger under my belt; that will show you that it is not too tight."

"Oh, yes, according to you, you can always do

that, because you hold your breath. My darling, you will please me very much if you will put on another dress. I shall be unhappy all the evening if I see you at the ball with that dress on."

To make an end of this, madame consents to put on a dress which does not please her half so well. This little contrariety has already deprived her of part of the pleasure she had promised herself and during the whole evening she thinks of that gown which was so becoming to her and which her husband has made her take off.

When they get to the ball, instead of leaving his wife free to enjoy the dancing, and seeking on his own behalf to get as much pleasure as possible, our husband does not lose sight of his wife. Do not imagine this is through jealousy, the attentive husband is never jealous; he is persuaded that his wife adores him, because she knows that she will not find another like him so far as attention and forethought go.

Here, as elsewhere, he evinces a touching solicitude. He walks up and down the drawing-room where his wife is seated. Hardly has she danced a contra-dance, when he comes up to her.

"You are very warm, darling."

"Why, no, not too warm."

"Oh, yes, you are very warm, are you going to dance another quadrille?"

"Certainly, I am engaged for it."

"I am sorry — you should have rested."

After the following contra-dance, madame has hardly been led to her place by her squire, when her husband's face appears, and he places himself beside her, like one of those shadows which, by the illusion of dissolving views, one sees suddenly spring up before one.

"How red you are, my pet," says our attentive husband, with the uneasy look of a mother who feels her infant's pulse and finds him in a fever. Madame, who thinks this remark a trifle superfluous, tries to smile as she answers,—

"Is it surprising that one should have a color after dancing?"

"Yes, but I have never seen you so red as that."

Madame leans toward a woman seated near her, and says to her, quite low,—

"Have I such an extraordinary color? Do I look like a crab?"

"Why, no; you look very well, your husband does not know what he is talking about."

Presently, a young man who has managed to get some ices brings one to the attentive husband's spouse; the latter accepts it and is beginning to eat, when her husband takes it from her, saying,—

"Why, the idea, my darling! you are not going to eat that."

"And why not? it is an ice."

"I can see that, and that is why I don't want you to swallow a morsel; you are too warm, it will make you ill."

"But all these ladies have been dancing too, and they are eating ices."

"These ladies can do as they wish, that has nothing to do with me. But you are different, I know your constitution. An ice! oh, no — that will be an unpardonable imprudence. Would you like some punch?"

"You know well that I never drink punch, monsieur, that I cannot bear it, while I am very fond of ices."

"That makes no difference."

And monsieur sets to work on the ice meant for his wife, and he walks up and down in front of her enjoying it, and he is not ashamed to say,—

"It is excellent, very well frozen."

A little later the orchestra plays the prelude of one of Strauss' delightful waltzes. Madame is passionately fond of waltzing, which she does very gracefully and in good time. She accepts the arm of a young gentleman who is said to be a very good waltzer. They start off together, they have already made the tour of the room and obtained the applause of the spectators, when our husband, perceiving his wife in her progress, runs after her at the risk of being knocked down by those who are engaged in waltzing, and seizing her by the arm obliges her and her partner to stop, and says to her in his usually amiable manner,—

"Why, what are you doing now? What are you thinking of? You to waltz—? but I am here,

fortunately, to prevent you from doing anything so foolish."

"Why, monsieur, you know very well that I am quite fond of waltzing — that it does not make me dizzy."

"It does not make you dizzy, that is possible; but it will do you a great deal of harm. You will be ill to-morrow — I have consulted several doctors; they tell me that waltzing is injurious to nervous women, and you are extremely nervous, my darling."

"A few turns only, monsieur, and then we will stop," pleads the young gallant, addressing the husband.

"Yes, only a few turns my dear," says madame with a supplicating expression.

But monsieur is inexorable, he takes his wife by the arm, leads her to her place, and throws over her shoulders a pelisse, a mantle, anything that he finds to his hand.

Madame is furious, but she does not dare to say anything. People do not dispute in the presence of company; and besides, her husband has the reputation of being so gallant a man, so assiduous in his attentions to his wife, that people believe her to be excessively happy. She tries to dissimulate her weariness.

The hour for supper approaches; she knows, from the mistress of the house, that the ladies alone will be seated at the table; she may therefore eat

what she pleases without having to fear her husband's observation.

She hopes to indemnify herself at supper for the vexations of the evening, for she is very fond of supping; there are some ladies who are not averse to that occupation. I see nothing wrong there; on the contrary, I have a great esteem for ladies who are willing to admit that they eat like other mortals.

But, alas! a quarter of an hour before supper our husband arrives, holding on his arm his wife's pelisse; he throws it over her shoulders, saying,—

"My love, there's a carriage below, waiting for us."

"What! you want to go already?"

"Already! it is quite late enough."

"But they are going to have supper in a moment."

"That's exactly the reason I want to go; else you might allow yourself to be tempted to partake of something, and it will do you no good to eat in the evening, you, who are so delicate! You know very well you never take supper; nor I, either."

"But, monsieur, when one has passed a great part of the night in dancing, it is not the same as if one had gone to bed at eleven o'clock."

"Oh, it is all the same — I don't want you to eat anything this evening; devil take it! we must think of your precious health. Come, my dearest, the carriage is waiting for us."

Monsieur leads madame, who is fit to cry, and

who returns home mentally vowing that hereafter she will refuse to go out walking, or to a play, or a ball, or to dine in the city.

Do you imagine a woman can be very happy with such an over-attentive husband? Fortunately this species is rare.

The married man who pushes his attentions to his better half so ridiculously far as the one I have just depicted to you is a perfectly insupportable being, who would bring about a nervous attack with any woman who was the least bit susceptible to such illness. And do you suppose it is from extreme love for his wife that this gentleman so conducts himself? If so, undeceive yourself. What the fellow wants is that he shall be quoted as a model for husbands; as a man who worships his wife, and has no thought but for her; as a phœnix, in short.

If he really loved his wife he would not be incessantly after her, like the apothecaries after M. de Pourceaugrac. I place such husbands in the ranks of hypocrites.

We have also husbands who, before other people, devour their wives with caresses; who cannot be near their better halves without fondly clasping their waists. Occasionally one of these husbands will go so far as to kiss his wife in public; he will touch her neck or her cheeks with his lips, or even her mouth, in an apparent delirium of ecstacy, as if he were kissing his wife for the first time.

While this is going on, just watch the expression on the face of a third person, sometimes on the faces of several third persons. One is always tempted to say to the husband,—

"Come, I am in the way here, I see, I will leave you to yourselves."

And if one does depart and leave him alone with his wife, the gentleman who seems to be desirous of devouring her with kisses will be caught in his own trap.

Apart from the consideration that, in conducting himself thus before everybody, he is totally lacking in good breeding, in decency, in politeness, and in the most simple good manners — the married man who is so demonstrative to his wife before witnesses is usually very bad-tempered and sometimes even brutal at home.

Let us follow him there; we shall have a change of scene almost as complete as those at the opera.

"Why isn't breakfast ready?"

This is monsieur's first question when he gets up, and it is put in a very ill-tempered tone.

"Why, my dear, it isn't late."

"Not late! What do you mean by not late? Suppose I want to breakfast earlier! Suppose I am hungry — but they are such dawdlers here! Why have they made coffee? I want chocolate."

"You should have told me, dear."

"You should have asked me."

"You usually take coffee."

"That is why I want a change today. It would not be much trouble for you to ask me what I want. Who laid that fire? It's very nice, very pleasing — they don't even know how to build a fire here. What is the matter with this bread?"

"It is oatmeal bread."

"I've told you before that I don't like oatmeal bread. You've made it on purpose to vex me. Some one rang the bell this morning, who was it?"

"That fair young man who has been here twice before to consult you as to whether he ought to marry. You told me he bored you; so this morning I sent him away, telling him you had already gone out."

The husband almost jumps out of his chair and thumps his knees angrily as he shouts,—

"And who asked you to send that young man away? You're always doing something stupid! I wanted to speak to him particularly today. I had some information to give him, and for you to tell him I was not in! I'll be hanged if they know how to do anything here that will please me!"

In his anger, monsieur fails to observe that he is putting his elbow into his coffee cup; the cup crashes to the ground and the coffee soaks into his dressing-gown; this redoubles his exasperation.

"There's my dressing-gown spoiled now," he shouts. "That is your fault, madame."

"How can it be my fault? You need not have upset your cup."

"There was no need of putting me out of temper this morning."

"You are right, there was no need to do so, for you woke up in a bad temper."

"Have you done with your stupid remarks? Take care! don't push me too far."

"Good heavens! you need not look so furious. It's easy to be seen that we are alone."

"Will you keep still?"

"In company, you devour me with caresses, so that every one may think me very happy. Ah, if they only knew how you treat me—when we are alone."

"Will you hold your tongue?"—grinding his teeth.

"It is surprising how much those kisses, showered on me before everybody, please me."

"If you don't have done, I'll throw my cup in your face."

"You would be capable of it, you ugly wretch!"

"Oh, you call me a wretch! there! take that."

The cup flies over towards madame, who dodges it by leaning forward; but who does not always escape the slap in the face that follows the cup.

While madame is crying, the bell is heard; the maid announces a visitor. Then monsieur says to his wife, with a threatening look,—

"I hope you are not going to cry before everybody. Wipe your eyes quickly. If not, I shall begin again when they are gone."

The visitor enters. Monsieur has immediately assumed a cheerful, pleasant expression, and a soft, musical voice. The person who comes in says to madame,—

"How pale you are — and your eyes are red. Have you been ill?"

Monsieur does not allow his wife to answer.

"Oh, that is nothing," he says airily. "She read too late in bed last night—and that has tired her eyes. I often say to her, 'My pet, you will ruin your eyes by reading so far into the night'; but she won't listen to me, and then you see what happens — the next morning she is pale and has red eyes. But she has promised me to be more reasonable."

And as he says this, our man goes up to his wife and kisses her on the cheeks.

Of all vices, hypocrisy is the most disgusting; for those who practice it try to obtain credit for virtues that they do not possess. The robber who attacks you in the highway openly confesses that he is a robber. The husband who caresses his wife before everybody, and beats her in his home, is more vicious than the robber I have just mentioned.

The wife who possesses such a husband, and who remains faithful to her duties as a wife, deserves that people should raise statues to her; an altar, an obelisque, a triumphal arch.

The married man who wears nightcaps does

himself the greatest wrong in his household, in society, and in the profession which he has seen fit to adopt.

The nightcap, vulgarly called the "extinguisher," has two very grave faults, particularly for Frenchmen; it makes a man look ugly and it makes him look ridiculous.

If you are already ugly, what need is there of your wearing anything on your head that accentuates your plainness? You are going to answer me, "It doesn't matter before one's wife."

That is exactly where nearly all married men are wrong, they are not spruce enough when alone with their wives. If you would have these ladies remain fond of you, at least make an effort to please them.

You would not allow your mistress (if you have one) to see you in a nightcap; why, then, are you so indifferent towards your wife as to allow her to see you in that head-dress? Is it because you think your wife does not know how to judge what is becoming or unbecoming to you as well as another?

But the greater part of these gentlemen allow themselves, in their own homes, a disorder which is by no means that of art. They seem to say to themselves,—

"Pshaw! our wives will think us handsome enough anyway."

"Vanitas vanitatum! omnia vanitas."

You are completely mistaken, gentlemen, these ladies do not think you handsome enough anyway.

To return to nightcaps, proscribe them from entering your dwelling, have no transactions with them; remember that this concerns your head, and that if you once become accustomed to wearing these things, people will imagine you to be susceptible of wearing some other things also.

And, then, what is the use of looking like a simpleton?

We now pass to the meddlesome husband.

One is born a meddler, as one is born a man of genius, a mechanician, a musician, a poet, a cook-shop keeper; and the man who is meddlesome as a bachelor will be still more so when he is married. This information is for the benefit of the ladies.

It is very vexatious that the meddlesome man cannot see himself, examine himself, to the benefit of his household; it is probable that would cure him of his mania.

Certainly, one may be a meddler and yet be estimable in everything else; a meddlesome husband may worship his wife and children, do his business honorably, mount guard faithfully, and, in fact, acquit himself creditably of all the duties society imposes upon him. But in his household he will be no less insupportable, annoying, tiresome.

The first thing in the morning the meddlesome man finds a way of exercising his disagreeable habit, even before he gets out of bed.

"Give me my handkerchief, wife, pass me my handkerchief; it must be on the chair beside the bed, near you."

Madame, still half asleep, stretches out her arm and gives a handkerchief to her husband.

The latter is about to use it, but he stops, looks at the handkerchief, and cries,—

"This is not mine; my handkerchiefs haven't a colored border. This is yours."

"That's very likely, my dear."

"Yes, yes, that's yours. That is to say, your handkerchiefs have a blue border, this is brown — what does that mean?"

"It means that I also have some bordered with brown, apparently."

"Oh, you have some like this? and since when have you had them?"

"Since I bought them, of course."

"And when did you buy them."

"Good heavens! I don't remember the exact date now."

"That's singular! you didn't tell me you had bought any other handkerchiefs."

"I did not think it a matter of sufficient importance to make it necessary that I should impart it to you. Can I no longer buy the slightest article without asking your permission?"

"I don't say that. But, of course, you can see that I had reason to be astonished at seeing a handkerchief with a brown border."

Monsieur gets out of bed; he looks for his trousers, but cannot immediately find them; he gets impatient, and rings for the maid. The maid comes, and discovers her master in rather unconventional attire; but maids are used to that sort of thing, and it is probably not dangerous to their virtue.

"Jeannette, where are my slippers? I have been looking for them for an hour."

The maid shows monsieur his slippers, placed under the bed, behind a bedside table.

"There they are, monsieur!"

"Oh, there they are! But why did you put them there? Is that their usual place?"

"Mercy, monsieur, I thought it would be just as well to put them under the bed."

"Do I put them there of a morning? I usually put them under that armchair beside the fireplace. You must never change the place. Another time, be careful about that."

They dress, and breakfast is served. Madame takes her coffee as she reads the paper. Monsieur makes toast in front of the fire. Presently he touches his wife's knee.

"Did you put another log on the fire yesterday evening, after I went out?"

"A log, my dear? What? What did you say?"

"Why, I'm not talking Hebrew, am I? When I went out yesterday, at nine o'clock, there were still two logs on the fire, one large and one small;

that was quite sufficient for the rest of the evening. As for that, I don't want to prevent you from making a big fire if you are cold, but you must give me an account of it. Now this morning I find the log at the back; but there are three charred sticks in front. Why should there be three, eh, if you did not put another log on?"

"Oh, my dear, how you weary me with your charred sticks. They put wood on, or they do not put wood on, do you think I take note of that? I am reading a story which interests me, and you interrupt me for a stick of wood."

Monsieur holds his tongue; he contents himself with whistling in a low tone, which he always does when he receives an answer which displeases him. He continues his breakfast, presently he mutters,—

"This milk isn't good; there's never any cream on it, and yet the milkwoman gives us less than she used. It seems to me there might be a jar especially to get the milk in; then we should be able to tell if the milkwoman always gave exactly the same measure. Eulalie, have you a jar for that?"

Eulalie makes no answer, she continues to read.

"Tell me now, don't you think I am right? In having always the same jar, one can see at once if one has the right quantity?"

Madame answers angrily, but without ceasing to read,—

"Yes, yes, we will have a jar, have ten jars if you like, but leave me alone."

"I did not say ten, I said one. That won't cost much. They sell very pretty cups and milk jars in colored earthenware with raised figures. I've priced them, and they are worth twelve sous. I'll tell you where you can get them. By the way, this butter isn't first-class. How much did you pay for this butter, my dear?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"What! you don't know anything about it?"

"The maid bought it."

"But I presume you asked the maid what she paid for it?"

"Eh! of course! oh, it was thirty-six sous, I remember now."

"You are not sure. Jeannette! Jeannette!"

The servant comes, eating a surreptitious morsel.

"How much was this butter, Jeannette?"

"Thirty-six sous, monsieur."

"The pound?"

"Mercy, it certainly was not by the quart."

"I know very well it wasn't by the quart; but it might have been by the kilo[1]."

"What is that — the pilo?"

"Kilo, I said; it is the new weight; you ought to know how to reckon by the kilo. In fact, your butter cost more than it was worth. I ate some

[1] A kilo is one thousand grammes, somewhat more than two English pounds in weight.

yesterday at breakfast at one of my friend's; he only paid thirty-two sous and it was better than that."

"Did monsieur ask his friend the price?"

"Why not?"

Jeannette is about to depart, but monsieur stops her.

"What are you eating for your breakfast, Jeannette?"

"Some of the cold leg of mutton that was left."

"Oh, was there not some of the beef left from the day before yesterday?"

"Why, the idea! that was finished long ago."

The maid departs, and monsieur mutters,—

"It seems to me, there should still be some of the beef left."

When the time for putting the room in order arrives, monsieur is always in the way of the maid's broom; he intends to see that she leaves no dust in the corners, and that she thoroughly dusts the furniture. The servant, made impatient by this, always manages to throw the sweepings over her master's legs.

If monsieur is going out with madame, he examines every portion of her toilet.

"Are you going to put on that gown?"

"Yes, my dear."

"It doesn't fit well at the waist. Oh, you are going to wear that lilac bonnet?"

"Of course; is it not pretty?"

"Oh, yes, it is pretty, but I don't like the flowers on it. Why, you've taken the lace off that shawl! why did you do that?"

"Because it was too fine for the shawl, which has now seen its best days."

"I assure you it looked much better with the lace on."

Thanks to her husband's criticisms, madame makes her toilet all over again or sometimes ends by not going out at all because she has been put out of temper.

Madame tells monsieur that she wants to buy two or three summer gowns. Monsieur makes no answer; but the next day he comes in, carrying three pieces of stuff for gowns which he has bought for his wife. He gives them to her, saying,—

"There, I hope they will suit you."

Madame pretends to be pleased, so as not to hurt her husband's feelings; but the gowns he has bought do not please her taste, either in color or texture; she wishes they were worn out, that she might have others. Had she bought the dresses herself, she would have chosen prettier ones and no doubt she would have paid less for them.

Some time before the dinner hour our meddlesome man does not fail to go into the kitchen to ferret about; he uncovers stewpans and saucepans; he tastes ragouts, he calls the cook.

"What is that, in there?"

"A fricassée of fowl, monsieur."

"Have you put mushrooms in it?"

"Certainly, monsieur."

"That's singular, I don't find any. Oh, yes, I see them. Have we meat soup to-day?"

"Yes, monsieur, here is the pot-au-feu."

"That's right! But you put too many vegetables in your pot, and that spoils the bouillon. How many carrots did you put in your stewpan?"

"Faith, monsieur, as if I could remember how many. I put in all they gave me. Must I count the carrots now?"

"It would be much better if you did. I'll wager there are six, at least."

And monsieur uncovers the stewpan looks in it, and tries to count the vegetables; the cook, enraged at seeing her master constantly in the kitchen, feels as if she would like to tie a dishcloth to his coat.

During dinner monsieur notices that his servant's nose is red, that his wife has affixed her napkin by one pin instead of two, and that her cat is too fat.

In the evening comes company. Monsieur scolds the maid if one of the visitors has not wiped his feet on the doormat; he goes to see that they put sugar in the glasses of water; it is he who takes a lady's hat and shawl, and puts it somewhere, saying,—

"Be easy, I have placed it in safety. When you leave, remember to ask me for it."

And when the lady asks for her shawl they find that the cat has ruined it, because monsieur, who wants to do everything better than anybody else, has carried the shawl into a room where no one goes except the cat.

When they go to bed monsieur goes into every room to see that they are in order.

He gets up two or three times to make sure that the maid has extinguished her candle, and to see that the doors are locked.

When a servant enters the service of a meddlesome married man she does not usually make a long stay there, but presently demands her wages and departs.

But this gentleman's wife cannot do as does the domestic.

Then there is the husband who goes to the theatre with his wife.

Madame has a desire to go to the Vaudeville; monsieur says to her, just as they are leaving for the play,—

"My darling, what they are giving tonight at the Vaudeville does not appear to me to be very amusing. Let us go to the Français; it seems to me, that will be preferable."

"What are they giving at the Français?"

"'Le Mariage de Figaro.'"

"We have seen that, I don't know how many times."

"All the same, it is very amusing, and then it

is so well staged. Decidedly, we must go to the Français."

Madame yields; her husband wants to take her to the play and that is a great concession on his part already, so she wishes to evince her gratitude and let him conduct her to what theatre he pleases.

They reach the theatre and go into a box, madame seats herself in the front, and monsieur has a place beside her; but instead of looking at the play he fixes his lorgnette on all the ladies who are in the audience, and turns his back on the actors and his wife. The play begins, but monsieur continues his inspection of the house, from time to time exclaiming,—

"There's a woman who is not half bad-looking; but these lights are so deceptive. There's one with very beautiful teeth, but what a style her hair is dressed in, and how provincial looking she is! How uncomfortable it is here; one doesn't know where to put one's knees. These boxes are far too small; they have a genius for making them as though they were to accommodate a race of dwarfs. I am going to stand at the back."

Monsieur passes behind madame and continues his oglings. His wife ventures a remark as to the merits of an actor, and he answers her,—

"Eh? what did you say? By Jove! I didn't hear that part."

After a few moments, monsieur places himself in the front again, exclaiming,—

"One can see nothing at all from the back; these boxes are very ill-constructed."

He turns his glasses on to the body of the house and makes remarks to his wife, who would rather hear the play. During the following act, monsieur sees one of his friends at the entrance to the balcony and goes to talk with him. He comes in again as the act is drawing to a close, and soon leaves the box again to walk in the foyer. This time he remains outside for a long time. When he comes back the fourth act has begun, and his wife says to him, in a rather displeased tone,—

"Why, where have you been?"

"In the foyer, talking with some acquaintances."

"And I stayed alone."

"By Jove! my dear, I can't stay nailed to the same place during the whole evening, it makes me fidgety, and then, when I try to talk with you, you don't answer."

"I was listening to the play."

"The play! why, good heavens! we know it by heart, we have seen it ten times.

"It is so well staged and played."

"Yes, yes, but I've seen them all in it before. Boxkeeper! boxkeeper!"

The boxkeeper appears at the door of the box.

"Give me the evening paper, the 'Moniteur,' the 'Messager,' no matter which — that I may have something to read."

The boxkeeper gives monsieur a paper, our hus-

band devours its contents, and the act finishes without his saying a word to his wife or listening to the scene that is being played.

During the next pause between the acts, which is the last one, he insists on going out to buy some oranges; but his wife tells him very positively that she does not wish him to go. He is, perforce, obliged to remain in the box; but he gets up and sits down again every moment; he again directs his lorgnette on a rather pretty person whom he has perceived in the box opposite, and that he may the better observe her, he turns his back on his wife.

They begin the fifth act, and madame cannot help saying to her husband,—

"Really, you have a very singular fashion of conducting yourself at a play, if some of our acquaintances should see you turning your back on me they would think that we were very uncomfortable in our domestic life."

Monsieur turns round so he can look at the stage, muttering,—

"Oh, of course, if it vexes you; that's a different matter."

The play goes on, and monsieur does not stir. When the curtain falls madame turns towards him, to see if he is satisfied; and she then discovers that her husband is fast asleep. She nudges him, and he opens his eyes and tries to appear wide awake.

"Bravo! bravo!" he exclaims, "they played it to perfection. I am very much pleased."

So they go home; but madame says to herself,—

"It seems to me he might just as well have taken me to the Vaudeville."

I do not quite know why I make a separate class of the licentious married man; for, with very few exceptions, they (the married men) are all more or less so.

They always say to themselves, when they marry: "Now, that is all past and done with; I am going to be virtuous. I have done enough folly. I know life; and, after all, that sort of thing is monotonous. I am quite resolved to be faithful to my wife."

Some months later, the married man flirts, tries to be pleasing, captivating, whenever he is with a pretty woman; he ogles, sighs, and even ventures declarations — precisely as if he were not a married man — of course, those who are prudent abstain from writing love letters, or if they are obliged to employ epistolary communication, they disguise their writing, do not sign it, or sign it with a fictitious name — a conventional name. "Verba volant, scripta manent."

Nearly all these gentlemen assume a pretty nickname, that their wives have never known them by, and in the circles where they go as bachelors, at the sly parties, at grisettes' and kept women's abodes, M. Dupont calls himself Arthur, M. Benoit gives himself the name of Charles, M. Durand makes them call him Isidore, and so on.

The porter is always instructed, these gentlemen do not fail to say to him,—

"If any letters come for M. Isidore give them to me; but only when I am alone, never before my wife."

The married men know how to help each other, serve each other in their little gallant intrigues, too.

Thus, monsieur has an appointment for the next day with a sensitive young person, to whom he is going to give a little dinner in a private room in a restaurant, He goes in search of one of his friends, a married man like himself, and whose heart is as easily inflamed as his own. He takes him aside and says to him,—

"Tomorrow, I dine with you."

"What, tomorrow? Why, I don't know about that."

"Listen to me: tomorrow, it is understood that I dine with you at a restaurant, a bet—a party arranged for some time—you understand. I have told my wife that, because tomorrow I am not going home to dinner; do you take me?"

"Oh, very good; that will suit me perfectly, for I happen to dine in town tomorrow myself."

"If you have time to drop in for a moment, you can speak of our dinner before my wife, and that will seem quite natural."

"Willingly. I'll call in on you presently."

"Thank you, my dear fellow, I'll do as much for you some time, you know."

"Confound it! that's all right."

During the day the friend calls on our seductive married man, and does not fail to say to him, in his wife's presence,—

"Oh, by the way, we dine together tomorrow; I hope you haven't forgotten it."

"At five o'clock at the Rotonde, I believe."

"Five o'clock to the minute — military time. Madame, I hope you'll forgive me for taking your husband away from you tomorrow; but it's a stag party, and has been agreed on for a long time. As for that, you can be easy, we shall be very prudent."

And madame has the goodness to answer,—

"I am always easy when I know my husband is with you."

The licentious married man ordinarily has little to say to his wife; he rarely opposes her, he promises her all that she wants — she desires to go to a concert, to the Bois-de-Boulogne, to see a play that is having a great run, to pass a day in the country; he always answers,—

"Yes, we'll go, I'll take you there — I promise you."

These promises are unceasingly renewed, but are never realized. Sometimes she gets impatient, and says,—

"You have been promising me to go into the country for a century. The weather is delightful — why can't we go today?"

"I can't go today, I have business — I've two lawyers to see."

"Well, tomorrow, then."

"Oh, yes. Why no, now I think of it that is impossible; tomorrow I must go to a creditors' meeting, I can't absent myself from that."

"The day after tomorrow, then."

Forced into his last intrenchments, monsieur answers,—

"The day after tomorrow, that is settled."

"I shall dress myself early. We shall start at noon, shall we not?"

"At noon, yes, my dearest."

Upon the day appointed madame hastens to dress for the occasion; she is ready a little before noon and asks the maid where her husband is.

"Monsieur went out at eleven o'clock, but he said he would soon be in."

Madame waits. An hour passes, then another. Madame loses all hope, she sadly takes off her bonnet and shawl and her gown. At length, at four o'clock, monsieur arrives, all out of breath, all in a perspiration, and looking extremely tired.

"What! you are not ready?" says he to his wife.

"Ready? I was ready at noon, I was still so at one o'clock, at two, but, seeing you did not come, I changed my things."

"Had I known that, I should not have hurried so much."

"Oh, you hurried, did you? and you get here at four when we were to have started at twelve."

"I could not help it, I met some people and they delayed me."

"You are always meeting some people. It would be much better to tell me you don't wish to go out with me, that would have been frank, and I should not have had the trouble of dressing and waiting for you."

"Oh, if you are going to quarrel and cry and scold, I shall go out," and monsieur takes his hat and disappears. This is how most of the excursions planned by this gentleman and his wife turn out.

Sometimes, however, monsieur cannot escape going out with his wife; the latter looks very nice, and is quite proud of going out on her husband's arm; the thing is sufficiently rare to seem exceptionally delightful. But hardly has the couple got to the end of the street than monsieur seems to be struck by a sudden idea, stops and exclaims,—

"By Jove, there's that attorney waiting for me—I must at least go and tell him I can't be with him. It's not two steps from here — wait, dearest! go right straight on, you turn to the left on the boulevard, and keep on the same side. I'll be with you again directly." And, before madame has had time to object, her husband has disappeared and left her alone in the middle of the street. She decides to walk slowly on; she keeps to the way that her

husband has indicated to her on the left of the boulevards; she walks thus for several hours, but she does not see her husband again, and at last is obliged to go home alone. In the evening, monsieur says to her when he comes in,—

"I can't imagine how I missed you, I looked for you everywhere; ten times did I go all along the boulevards but could not see you."

When the married man pays court to a woman who is free, the latter ordinarily says to him,—

"But what if your wife should learn you are courting other women?" and our husband invariably answers,—

"Oh by Jove, do you suppose my wife bothers her head about that? In the first place she is in ill-health—nearly always ill—so you can imagine —Provided she has all that she needs at home, that she can make her broths and herb teas, superintend her cooking and scold her maid, she is happy."

But what these gentlemen say does not prevent the ladies from being very well, or from thinking of something other than herb teas and their cooking.

In truth, when one sees all the bother, all the efforts of the imagination, all the fears, all the journeys, all the fatigues which are encountered by the married man who runs after the women, one wonders if these gentlemen would not be happier in loving their wives. Do you not think they

resemble those rebellious individuals—against the law and the National Guard — who to escape the orders of the sergeant-major and the gendarmes who pursue the refractory, pass their time in moving, in changing their names and their neighborhoods, in hiding and running away — and who would give themselves much less trouble if they quietly took their turn in mounting guard.

The gay, pleasure-loving married man passes in the world for a good fellow. Each one says, in speaking of him,—

"Do you know so-and-so? What an excellent fellow he is! always in a good-humor. How happy his wife must be."

Is it quite certain that his wife's fate is to be envied? If she lives in the city, there are but few days on which her husband does not bring some one to dinner; she expects four persons and he has invited six, and does not tell her until almost dinner-time. Madame is then obliged to run here and there to add to her bill of fare; and while she is giving herself an immense amount of trouble to prepare for the suitable entertainment of the guests her husband has brought, the latter amuses himself, laughs, smokes, plays billiards or cards, up to the moment that madame, quite wearied by the additional trouble he has given her, announces to the company that dinner is served.

At table, our gay married man is in a delightful humor; provided, however, that the roast be not

burned, that the wine be uncorked, and the coffee hot. If one of these things fail he will swear energetically enough, as he says,—

"Why, that is detestable. My dear, you must see, another time, that they pay more attention to it."

And the poor woman, who for several hours has not even had time to cool her flushed face, answers gently,—

"Yes, my dear, it is because they were—a little hurried — but it will not happen again."

After dinner, monsieur thinks of nothing but passing the evening cheerfully with his friends. Every kind of diversion is to his liking, even those which require people to get upon the furniture, to tear the curtains, throw water and turn everything upside down.

If he has a garden, the guests may run about there, play, tread down the grass, walk on the borders, lay waste the flowers, pick the fruits, break the branches; our man is the first to encourage his friends to do all these things.

"Pshaw!" he says to them, "we must amuse ourselves. Roll on the grass, frolic about, break things! Why, it is positively necessary that we should laugh a bit now and then."

And the next day it will give madame a good day's work to repair the damages committed in her domicile.

When monsieur takes his pleasure away from home, his wife is at least quiet; but often enough

our gay man comes home indisposed, from an excess of truffled turkey, champagne or punch. And instead of going peaceably to sleep, madame must make tea, she must administer all kinds of things to her husband — in fact, she must pass the night in caring for him.

And then these men of pleasure have very little disposition for business, for work, for earning money, in fact, — they only know how to spend it. And when a creditor comes, our man makes his escape as quickly as possible, saying,—

"You must go to my wife; I never interfere with such details as this."

This inclines me to think that in a household where the husband is a gay spirit, it is he who must be very happy.

Beware, gentlemen, of proving careless husbands, for carelessness is nearly allied to indifference, and the ladies sometimes revenge themselves on an indifferent husband.

The careless husband comes in, goes out, stays away, without ever troubling himself as to what is taking place in his household. If the maid says to him, "Madame has gone out"; he only says, "Ah," in a tone that is equivalent to "very good." If later on they tell him, "Madame hasn't come back yet"; or, "Madame is dining in the city," he reiterates his "Ah!" and says nothing more.

Do not imagine that he will inquire what time madame went out, or where she is gone or with

whom she is dining; he does not even think of putting a single one of those questions.

Sometimes when he comes home unexpectedly, which, however, is not his habit, he will find a young man, whom he has never seen before, with his wife. The young man bows and the husband greets him with politeness, while his wife says,—

"You don't know this gentlemen?"

"Why, no — no, I can't recall him."

"We met monsieur at Madame B——'s, he had the kindness to accompany me on the piano and afterwards sang a duet with me."

"Oh, very good! very good! I think I do remember now. Monsieur has a very pleasing voice."

"Monsieur begged permission to come and have a little music with me sometimes, and when you came in we were just beginning a piece."

"Very well, so do! so do! I won't disturb you. Monsieur is very kind to come and see us, and I am delighted that he should make you sing; that will keep you in voice, for the voice needs cultivating."

Our careless husband listens to the music for a few moments, but later leaves them together and goes to his study to attend to his business affairs.

However, the young man, who probably has developed a taste for duets as practised by himself and madame, comes every day and sometimes, even, in the evenings.

Do not suppose that the husband sees anything extraordinary in this assiduity, so far from that, he is so used to seeing the young man with his wife that when he does not find him there he will ask,—

"Where is Arthur?" or Edouard? or Alfred? as the case may be. "Why did he not come? Can he be ill? Have you sent to inquire at his house?" and a thousand other questions of the same kind.

When they go for a walk, madame takes her Sigisbé's arm and her husband walks beside her or in front or behind, it does not matter to him which.

Madame goes to a ball, a concert, a play, whenever it pleases her, and with whoever she likes; the husband never thinks anything of it. Madame often goes out very early to the bath; and sometimes comes home very tired and with either very red or very pale cheeks, and with her dress and collar singularly disarranged. The servants notice all these things, but monsieur pays no attention to them.

Monsieur has a salary of a thousand crowns, or a business which brings him in four or five thousand francs per annum. This does not permit him to give his wife a cashmere shawl, nor to buy her velvet gowns.

However, she wears a cashmere, and has jewels of the latest fashion; she trims her gowns with English embroidery, and monsieur does not say,—

"How comes it that you have a cashmere? How did you manage to pay for those jewels?"

And sometimes the house exhibits an amount of elegance and luxury that is not at all in accord with the husband's income. Still the husband never remarks,—

"How in the world is it that we can afford all these things?"

Here carelessness reaches a point where it might be called by another name. I do not wish to say what sobriquet might be applied to a married man who acts thus.

Following this portrait of the careless husband comes that of a jealous one.

When a man is married, he should take this stand,—

"Either my wife will be untrue to me, or she will not be untrue to me." (No one can possibly contest the truth of this proposition.) "If she be untrue to me, she does not deserve that I should vex myself, that I should suffer, that I should make myself unhappy in the fear of losing her heart; if she be true to me, I should be extremely wrong to doubt her. Thus, either in one hypothesis or in the other, I should still do very wrong to be jealous."

It seems to me this is an argument "ad hominem." Why, it is exactly as though I had said nothing; and that does not prevent any one from being jealous, because that feeling permits of no argument.

A married man who is jealous is unhappy and

makes everybody about him unhappy. The most harmless occurrence gives rise in his mind to a thousand suspicions. Then he plagues his wife, is short with his children, scolds his maid, and beats his dog — if he has one.

When people gamble in the lottery, those who have a passion for this kind of play find in everything they see, everything they hear, everything they dream, a motive to stake their money on such or such a number. If they have dreamed of a cat, they hasten to put something on forty-four and eighty-eight. If they meet a drunkard, they must play the seventy-seven and the thirteen.

A cab passes, they must stake on its number; if it is over ninety, they dissect the number and find therein three winning numbers, or even four. Some one raps three times on the floor in the morning, that is a warning direct from Providence and they must play three.

In looking at a wall they see strange designs which seem to represent numbers; in looking at the stars, they represent numbers, in the bottom of a coffee cup they perceive figures; on the snow, in the sand, in the fire; everywhere, in fact, and in everything, they find reasons for putting into the lottery.

The jealous man is exactly like these patrons of the lottery.

If his wife sleeps badly, it is because she is preoccupied about something. She has dreamed aloud,

she has spoken of monsieur such-a-one, and of the Grand Turk; true, she is not in love with the Grand Turk, but she may be with monsieur such-a-one.

Madame gets up early and makes no noise, thinking that her husband is still asleep, but the latter, who always sleeps with one eye open, says to her,—

"Devil take it; you use much precaution in getting up this morning — you are afraid of waking me, it would seem."

"My dear, as I thought you were asleep it seemed to me I ought to make no noise."

"Ah, no doubt you did not wish to awaken me, a sleeping husband is more convenient. Why did you get up so early this morning? What are you hurrying for?"

"Nothing; but I could sleep no longer, besides, it is quite time to get up."

Madame dresses herself. Monsieur looks at her from head to foot; with a glance he has taken in every part of her toilet.

"What have you put that gown on for?" he exclaims; "are you going out?"

"I have no intention of doing so. This gown is one of those I habitually wear in the house."

"And that cap? one would say you had something on hand today."

"What do you mean? something on hand? don't I usually put on a cap?"

"Yes, but sometimes there is a little more particularity in the way of putting it on."

Madame shrugs her shoulders, and does not answer.

If monsieur has an appointment, and his wife says to him, "My dear this is the time you appointed to do so-and-so"; he will answer, "You are in a great hurry to have me go out."

If madame goes out he counts the minutes till she comes back again. He knows where she is going, what purchases she is to make and with whom she has to speak; he has calculated how long it will take her to do all that; he has traced the itinerary of her route, she must not turn aside from it.

If madame remains out a quarter of an hour longer than the time calculated by her husband, or if he should meet her in another street than one of those she has mentioned to him — he concludes from that, that his wife has intrigues.

If madame does not eat at dinner, that is suspicious; she must have had something outside. If she has a good appetite, that also is suspicious. What has she been doing to get such an appetite as that?

If she prefers one theatre to another that is suspicious. Probably she has made an appointment with some one and wants to go where she hopes to meet the person in whom she is interested.

If she refuses to go out in the evening with her

husband, it is very suspicious; she must be expecting to receive some one when she is alone. If she urges her husband not to go out, but to stay with her, it is very suspicious; it is because she wants to dissipate all the suspicions her husband might conceive, and in acting thus she really hopes that he will go out.

If she is cold and does not respond to her husband's caresses, that is extremely suspicious; it is that she loves another and her husband's caresses weary her. If she is very loving, very lavish of her caresses, that is still more suspicious; she is managing so as to hide from her husband the love she feels for another.

If she speaks often of a certain gentleman, that is always suspicious; as it shows that she often thinks of him. If she never speaks of him, that is to hide her game. If she speaks ill of him, that is bad too; for she does it so her husband may not be jealous of him.

And so on and so on. I might go on like this for a very long time; for you see very well that it is limitless, and exactly like the gambler in a lottery who sees numbers in everything.

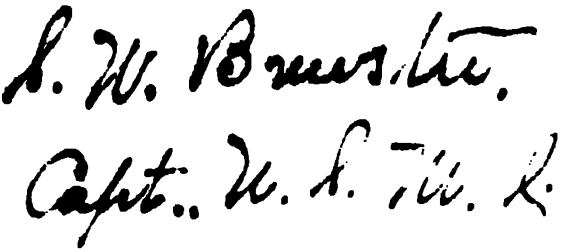
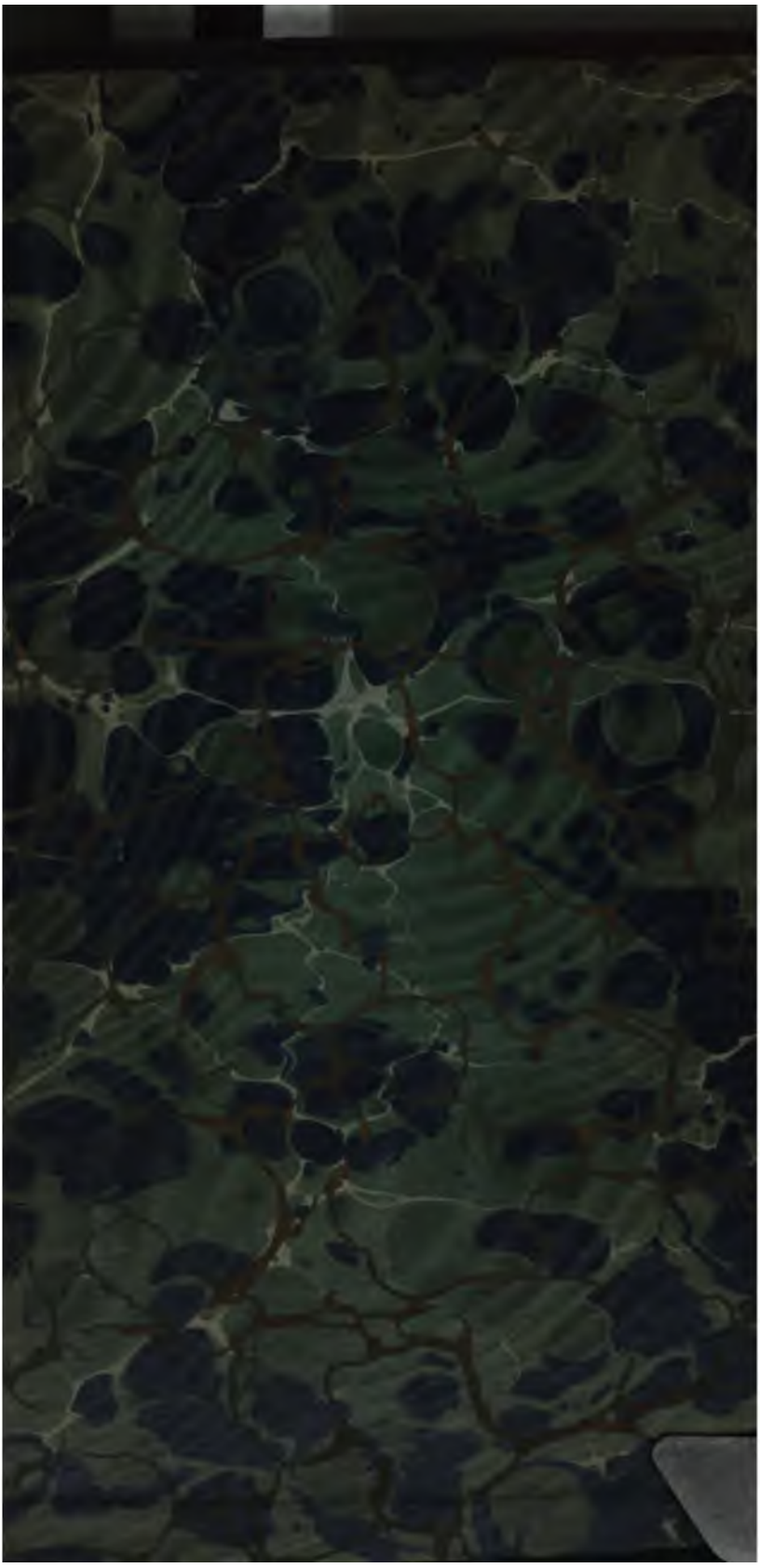
To sum up, jealousy is a very sad thing—which sometimes turns to tragedy, as in the case of Othello.

It is a well-confirmed fact that jealousy does not preserve anything, and prevents nothing. Sometimes, on the contrary, it gives a woman the desire

to do what she else had never thought of, for nothing exasperates like injustice.

And, then, a jealous man is tiresome; a tiresome man is very contrary, very unamiable, very sad, and people get into the habit of rejoicing when he is not there.

Happy the husbands who are not — (I was still going to say jealous).

As for the husband who is — what you know well, that makes absolutely no change in his face, his deportment, his manners or his way of expressing himself.

"Ab uno disce omnes."